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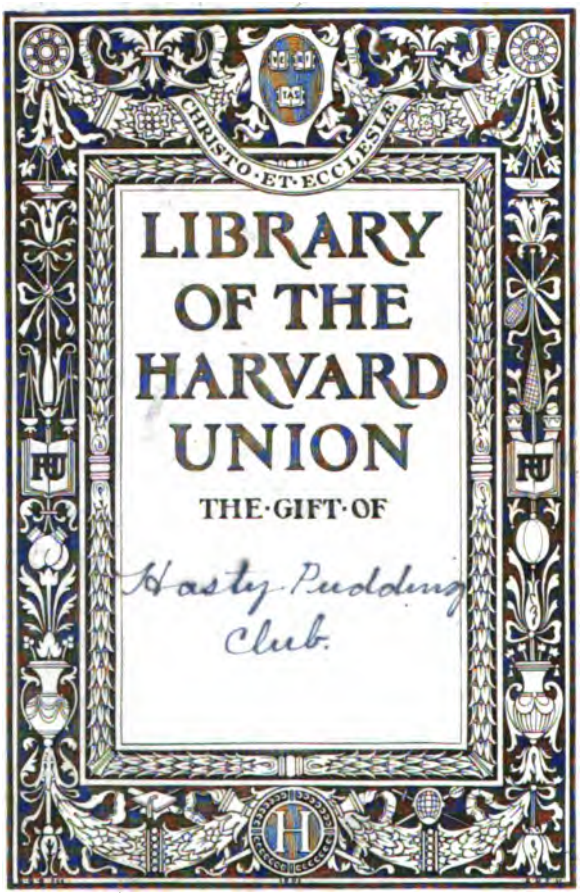

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THE

PAGE OF THE DUKE OF SAVOY

BY ALEXANDRE DUMAS

WITH ILLUSTRATIONS

BOSTON
ESTES AND LAURIAT
1896

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THE

PAGE OF THE DUKE OF SAVOY.

FIRST PART.

I.

WHAT A MAN, IF PLACED ON THE HIGHEST TOWER OF HESDIN-FERT, MIGHT HAVE SEEN ON THE 5TH OF MAY, 1555, AT ABOUT TWO O'CLOCK IN THE AFTERNOON.

Let us at once transport, without further preface or preamble, those of our readers who do not fear to take a leap of three centuries across the past in our company, into the presence of men we would have them know, and into the midst of events we would have them witness.

The time is the 5th of May, of the year 1555. Henri II. is reigning over France; Mary Tudor over England; Charles V. over Spain, Germany, Flanders, Italy, and the two Indies, — that is to say, over a sixth part of the world.

The scene opens in the neighbourhood of the little town of Hesdin-Fert, which Emmanuel Philibert, Prince of Piedmont, has lately rebuilt, intending it to take the place of Hesdin-la-Vieux, captured by him last year, and razed to the ground. So you see we are travelling in that part of old France which was then called Artois, and which is known to-day as the department of the Pas-de-Calais.

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We say of old France, because Artois did actually become a portion of the patrimony of our kings under Philippe-Auguste, the conqueror of Saint-Jean-d'Acre and Bouvines; but, though it formed a part of France in 1180, and was given by Saint Louis to his younger brother, Robert, in 1237, it afterwards lapsed, somehow or other, into the hands of three women, — Mahaud, Jeanne I., and Jeanne II., — thus falling under the control of three different houses. Then, with Marguerite, sister of Jeanne II. and daughter of Jeanne I., it passed to Comte Louis de Mâle, whose daughter brought it, together with the counties of Flanders and Nevers, into the house of the Dukes of Burgundy.

Finally, after the death of Charles the Bold, Mary of Burgundy, the last heiress of the gigantic name and immense possessions of her father, made, on the day she married Maximilian, son of the Emperor Frederick III., both name and possessions part and parcel of the domains of the house of Austria, in which they were swallowed up, as a river is swallowed up in the ocean.

It was a great loss for France, for Artois is a fine and rich province. Consequently, for three years, with varying fortunes and unforeseen results, Henri II. and Charles V. have been struggling face to face, and foot to foot, the one to regain, the other to keep it.

During the furious war in which the son encountered the old enemy of the father, and, like the father, was to have his Marignano and Pavia, each had his good and bad days, his victories and defeats. France had seen the army of Charles V. driven in disorder from the siege of Metz, and had taken Marienbourg, Bouvines, and Dinant; the Empire, on the other hand, had stormed Thérouanne and Hesdin, and, furious at its defeat before Metz, had burned the one, and levelled the other to the ground.

We have compared Metz to Marignano, and the comparison is not exaggerated. An army of fifty thousand infantry and fourteen thousand cavalry, decimated by cold and disease, had vanished like a mist, leaving as the sole trace

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of its existence ten thousand dead, two thousand tents, and a hundred and twenty cannon!

So great was the demoralisation that the fugitives did not even try to defend themselves. Charles of Bourbon was pursuing a body of Spanish cavalry; the captain who commanded it halted and rode straight up to the hostile leader.

"Prince, duke, or simple gentleman," he said, "or whatever else you be, if you are fighting for glory, seek it elsewhere; for to-day you are butchering men too feeble to fly, even, far less to resist you."

Charles of Bourbon sheathed his sword, and ordered his men to do the same; and the Spanish captain and his troop continued their retreat without being further troubled by them.

Charles V. was very far from imitating such clemency. When Thérouanne was taken, he ordered it to be delivered up to pillage and razed to the ground. Not only were the private houses destroyed, but even the churches, monasteries, and hospitals; not a vestige of a wall was left standing, and that there might not be one stone left on another, the inhabitants of Flanders and Artois were called in to scatter all that remained.

The summons was eagerly obeyed. The garrison of Thérouanne had been a thorn in the side of the people around, and they flocked to it, armed with spades, hammers, and pickaxes, which they plied with such good-will that the city disappeared like Saguntum under the feet of Hannibal, or Carthage before the breath of Scipio.

Hesdin was treated in the same way as Thérouanne.

But, in the mean while, Emmanuel Philiberf had been named commander-in-chief of the troops of the Empire in the Low Countries, and, if he could not save Thérouanne, he was at least able to rebuild Hesdin.

He had accomplished this immense work in a few months, and a new city sprang up as if by enchantment, a quarter of a league from the old. This new city, planted in the

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middle of the swamps of the Mesnil, on the banks of the Canche, was so well fortified that it excited the admiration of Vauban a hundred and fifty years after, although, during the course of these one hundred and fifty years the system of fortification had entirely changed.

Its founder called it Hesdin-*Fert;* that is to say, he had joined, in order to compel the new city to remember its origin, these four letters to its name, F. E. R. T., given with the white cross by the Emperor of Germany, after the siege of Rhodes, to Amadeus the Great, thirteenth count of Savoy; they signified: *Fortitudo ejus Rhodum tenuit,* which means, "His valour saved Rhodes."

But this was not the only miracle wrought by the promotion of the young general to whom Charles V. had just confided his army. Thanks to the rigid discipline which he established, the unhappy country, which for four years had been the theatre of war, was beginning to breathe; the severest orders were given to prevent pillaging and marauding; every officer guilty of disobedience was disarmed and imprisoned in his tent for a longer or shorter period, in sight of the whole army, and every private, taken in the act, was hanged.

The result was that, as hostilities had very nearly ceased on both sides, during the winter of 1554 and 1555, the last four or five months seemed to the inhabitants of Artois, when compared with the years that had elapsed between the siege of Metz and the reconstruction of Hesdin, something like a golden age.

There was still, now and then, some castle burned here and there, some farm pillaged, or house plundered, either by the French, who held Abbeville, Doullens, and Montreuil-sur-Mer, and who ventured on excursions into the enemy's territory, or by the incorrigible marauders, reiters, and gipsies who hovered on the outskirts of the imperial army; but Emmanuel Philibert was so successful in clearing the country of the French, and dealt such rough justice to his own soldiers that these catastrophes were becoming daily

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more rare. Such, then, was the condition of the province of Artois, and especially in the neighbourhood of Hesdin-Fert, on the day when our story opens; that is to say, the 5th of May, 1555.

But after giving our readers a rapid sketch of the moral and political state of the country, it remains for us, in order to complete the picture, to give them an idea of its material aspect, — an aspect that has totally changed since that period, thanks to the invasions of manufactures and the improvements in agriculture.

In order to accomplish this difficult task, and revive a past that has almost vanished, let us try to depict the scene which would meet the gaze of a spectator standing with his back to the sea on the loftiest tower of Hesdin, and having under his eyes the horizon, extending in a semicircle from the northern extremity of the little chain of hills which hides Béthune, to the last southern bluffs of the same chain at the foot of which Doullens rises.

He would have first, in front of him, advancing in a point towards the banks of the Canche, the thick and gloomy forest of Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise, whose vast green foliage, spread like a mantle over the shoulders of the hills, continued until its borders were dipped in the sources of the Scarpe, which is to the Scheldt what the Moselle is to the Rhine.

To the right of this forest, and, as a consequence, to the left of the observer we are imagining placed on the loftiest tower of Hesdin, at the back of the plain, sheltered by the same hills that bound the horizon, the villages of Enchin and Fruges indicated, by the bluish clouds of smoke which enveloped them like a transparent mist or translucent veil, that the chilly natives of these northern provinces had not yet bid adieu, in spite of the appearance of the first days of spring, to their kitchen fires, those jovial and comforting friends of the days of winter.

In front of these two villages, and not unlike a half-distrustful sentinel, who, though he has ventured to leave

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the forest, still thinks it better to keep close to its border, rose a pretty little dwelling, half château and half farm, called the Parcq.

A road, which shimmered like a gold ribbon on the green robe of the plain, might be seen stretching for some distance from the entrance to the farm, and then dividing into two branches, the one running straight to Hesdin, the other skirting the forest and connecting the dwellers in the Parcq with the villages of Frévent, Auxy-le-Château, and Nouvion in Ponthieu.

The plain, extending from these three places to Hesdin, formed the basin opposite the one we have just described; that is to say, it was situated to the left of the basin of the forest of Saint-Pol, and, consequently, to the right of the imaginary spectator who has been our cicerone so far.

It was the most remarkable part of the landscape, not by any means on account of the natural features of the ground, but because of the fortuitous circumstances that gave it animation at the present moment.

In truth, while the opposite plain was covered with ripening harvests, this was almost entirely hidden by the camp of the Emperor Charles V.

This camp, surrounded by ditches, and hemmed in by palisades, included an entire city, not of houses, but of tents.

From the centre of these tents rose the imperial pavilion of Charles V., like Notre Dame de Paris in the Cité, like the palace of the popes in Avignon, or like a three-decker in the midst of the crested waves of the ocean. At its four corners floated four standards, one of which ought to have sufficed human ambition: the standard of the Empire, the standard of Spain, the standard of Rome, and the standard of Lombardy; for this hero, this conqueror, this victor, as he was called, had been crowned four times, — at Toledo, with the crown of diamonds, as King of Spain and the Indies; at Aix-la-Chapelle, with the crown of silver, as Emperor of Germany; and, in fine, at Bologna, with

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the golden crown, as King of the Romans, and the iron crown, as King of the Lombards. And when an attempt was made to have his coronation take place at Rome and Milan instead of Bologna, when it was shown to him that the brief of Pope Stephen forbade the golden crown to be taken from the Vatican, and the decree of the Emperor Charlemagne prohibited the iron crown from leaving Monza, the haughty reply of this conqueror of François I. and Luther and Soliman was that it was his custom not to run after crowns, but to have crowns run after him.

And note well that these four standards were surmounted by his own standard, which pictured the Pillars of Hercules no longer as the limits of the Old World, but as the gateway of the New, and flung forth to all the winds of heaven this ambitious device, grown more portentously large by its very mutilation, *Plus ultra!*

At about fifty yards from the emperor's pavilion stood the tent of the commander-in-chief, Emmanuel Philibert, not distinguishable from those of the other captains, except that it bore two standards: one bearing the arms of Savoy, — a silver cross on a ground *gules*, with these four letters, whose meaning we have already explained, F. E. R. T.; and the other, his own private arms, representing a hand raising to heaven a trophy composed of lances, swords, and pistols, with this device, *Spoliatis arma supersunt;* that is to say, "Arms are still left to the despoiled."

The camp, which these two tents overlooked, was divided into four quarters, in the midst of which crept the river, crossed by three bridges. The first quarter was intended for the Germans; the second for the Spaniards; the third for the English. The fourth contained the park of artillery, entirely renewed since the defeat of Metz, and raised to the number of a hundred and twenty cannons and fifteen bombards, by the addition of the pieces taken from the French at Thérouanne and Hesdin.

On the breech of those taken from the French, the emperor had engraved his two favourite words, *Plus ultra!*

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Behind the cannons and bombards were ranged, in three lines, the caissons and waggons containing the military stores; sentinels with drawn swords, but without arquebuse or pistol, were there to see that no one approached these volcanoes, which a single spark would make burst forth in flame.

Other sentinels were stationed outside the enclosure.

In the streets of the camp, regulated like those of a city, thousands of men were moving about with military activity, tempered, nevertheless, by German gravity, Spanish pride, and English moroseness.

The sun was glinting on all these arms, which sent back his rays in flashes; the wind played with all these standards and banners and pennons, furling and unfurling their silky folds and brilliant colours at its own sweet will.

This activity and noise, which always ruffle the surface of multitudes and of oceans, formed a striking contrast to the silence and solitude on the other side of the plain, where the sun only lit up the shifting mosaic of the harvests, then at different stages of maturity, and where the wind stirred those rustic flowers which young girls delight to weave into purple and azure garlands wherewith to adorn themselves on Sundays.

And now that we have devoted the first chapter of our book to a description of what would have met the eyes of an observer stationed on the highest tower of Hesdin-Fert at any time during the 5th of May, 1555, let us devote the second chapter to certain things that would have escaped his eyes, however piercing they might be.

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II.

THE ADVENTURERS.

The things that would have escaped his eyes, however piercing they might be, were taking place in the thickest, and consequently gloomiest spot in the forest of Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise, at the back of a grotto which the trees enveloped with their shade and the ivy with its network; while for the greater security of the present occupants of this grotto, a sentinel, hidden in the brushwood, lying flat on his stomach, and as motionless as one of the trunks on the ground around him, was watching to see that no profane eye disturbed the important conventicle, to which, however, we, in our capacity of romancer, — that is to say, magician before whom all doors are thrown open, — propose introducing our readers.

Let us take advantage of the moment when the sentinel, who has not seen us, but whom we have discovered, turns his eyes in the direction of the noise made by a frightened goat bounding through a brake, to glide, unperceived, into the grotto, and follow in its slightest details the incident occurring there, sheltered, as we are, behind a rocky projection.

This grotto is occupied by eight men, differing in face, costume, and temper, although, from the arms they bear, or which lie on the ground within reach of their hands, it is clear they have adopted the same calling.

One of them, with ink-stained fingers and a sly, crafty countenance, is dipping his pen — with the nib of which he smoothes out one of those hairs to be found on the surface of badly made paper — in an inkhorn such as law-clerks, ushers, and copyists then wore at the girdle, and is writing

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on a makeshift stone table propped on two massive supports; while another, holding a burning pine branch, is illuminating not only the writer, table, and paper, but also himself and his six other companions with more or less brilliancy, according to their proximity or remoteness.

Undoubtedly the document in question must be interesting to the company at large, seeing the ardour with which they severally take part in its concoction.

Three of them, however, seem less taken up than the others with this purely material concern.

The first is a handsome young man, about twenty-four or twenty-five years old, elegantly clad in a cuirass of buffalo-hide, proof against sword and dagger surely, if not against a bullet. A maroon velvet jacket, a little faded undoubtedly, but still very presentable, after disclosing, at the shoulder, a sleeve cut after the Spanish style, — that is to say, after the latest fashion, — fell about the length of four fingers below the jerkin, falling in ample folds over breeches of green cloth, also of the newest mode, and lost in a pair of boots high enough to protect the thighs on horseback, and soft and pliant enough to sink down below the knees when the wearer is on foot.

He is humming a rondeau of Clément Marot, all the time twisting his black silky moustache with one hand, and combing, with the other, his hair, which he wears a little longer than was fashionable at the period, evidently with the object of turning to the best account the soft wavy locks with which Nature had endowed him.

The second is a man scarcely thirty-six years old; only he has a face so scarred and furrowed by wounds that it is impossible to assign him any age. His arm and a portion of his chest are bare; and on whatever part of his body happens to be exposed to view, a series of scars may be observed, quite as numerous as those that adorn his visage. He is engaged in attending to a wound which has denuded a part of the biceps; luckily, the wound is in the left arm, and therefore the consequences will not be so grave as if

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it had affected the right. He is holding between his teeth the end of a linen bandage, which he is binding tightly round a handful of lint applied to the cut, first having steeped the said lint in a certain balm prepared according to the prescription of a gipsy, and believed by him to be infallible. For that matter, not a word of complaint issues from his lips, and he appears as insensible to pain as if the member he is trying to heal was made of pine or of oak.

The third is a man of forty, tall and thin, with pale features, and the lineaments of an ascetic. He is on his knees in a corner, slipping a chaplet of beads between his fingers, and, with a volubility that belongs only to him, is hurrying through a dozen *Paters* and a dozen *Aves*. From time to time his right hand drops the chaplet, and resounds on his breast with the reverberation of a cooper's mallet on an empty cask. But after he has pronounced a *mea culpa* two or three times in a loud voice, he returns to his beads, and runs them as rapidly through his fingers as a monk does his rosary, or a dervish his *combolio*.

The three personages we have still to describe have a character, Heavens be praised! not less marked than the five we have already had the honour of passing in review under the eyes of our readers.

One of these has his two hands pressed on the very table on which the writer is performing his task; he follows, without missing a single stroke, all the turns and twists of the pen. It is he that has the most observations to make on the document in question; and it must be admitted that his observations, although tinctured with egotism, are always full of artfulness, and, strange to say, so much do the two things seem opposed, of sound sense also. He is forty-five, has cunning eyes, small and deep-set, under fair, bushy eyebrows.

Another of them is lying flat on the ground; he has found a stone good for giving a sharp edge to swords and a keen point to daggers. He is turning the discovery to account, and, by repeated rubbings on this stone, accom-

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panied by an abundant expenditure of saliva, he is gradually restoring the point of his poniard, which had become blunted, to its usual sharpness. His tongue, which sticks out between his teeth from a corner of his mouth, is itself a witness to all the attention and, we may add, all the interest excited in him by his present occupation. However, this attention is not so absolute as to hinder him from lending an ear to the discussion. If the clauses of the instrument meet his approval, he simply gives a nod of satisfaction; if, on the contrary, it wounds his moral sense or sets his calculations at defiance, he rises, approaches the scribe, places the point of his dagger on the paper, with these four words, "Pardon; you are saying?" and does not raise his dagger until he is perfectly satisfied with the explanation, — a satisfaction expressed by a still more abundant salivation and more furious rubbing of his dagger on the stone, thanks to which the weapon promises soon to resume its pristine keenness.

The last, and here we must begin by acknowledging the wrong we have done in ranking him among those occupied with such purely material interests as are for the nonce engrossing the scribe and his assistants; the last, with his back supported by one of the walls of the grotto, his hands hanging by his side, and his eyes raised to heaven, or rather to the damp, gloomy vault on which, like will-o'-the-wisps, the flickering rays of the pine torch are playing, — the last, we say again, is at once a dreamer and a poet. What is he searching for at the present moment? Is it the solution of some problem such as were lately resolved by Christopher Columbus or Galileo? Is it the form of one of those tercets constructed by Dante, or one of those octaves chanted by Tasso? Only the demon that keeps watch and ward within him could give us an answer; and he concerns himself so little with material questions — being entirely absorbed in the contemplation of abstractions — that he has allowed all the clothing of the worthy poet, which is not steel or copper or iron, to fall into rags.

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And now that we have so far sketched the portraits as well as we could, it is right to give a name to each of them.

The individual holding the pen is called Procope; he is a Norman by birth, and almost a jurist by education; he lards his conversation with axioms drawn from the Roman law and aphorisms borrowed from the Capitularies of Charlemagne. Any one who is a party to an interchange of documents with him may count on a lawsuit following close on the transaction. It is true that whoever will rest satisfied with his word shall find his word golden; only his manner of keeping it does not always square with morality, at least as that virtue is apprehended by the vulgar. We shall quote only a single example of this, — an example, also, which accounts for the adventurous career he has adopted at the time we meet him. A noble lord of the court of François I. came, one day, to propose an affair to him and three of his companions. The royal treasurer was to bring, that very evening, a sum of a thousand gold crowns from the Arsenal to the Louvre; the proposal was to stop the treasurer at the corner of the Rue Saint-Pol, take the thousand crowns from him, and share them as follows: five hundred with the great lord, who would wait in the Place Royale until the job was done, and who, as a tribute to his rank, demanded half; the other half between Procope and his three companions, who would thus each receive one hundred and twenty-five crowns. The word was pledged on both sides, and the matter was finished according to agreement; only when the treasurer had been duly robbed, murdered, and flung into the river, the three companions of Procope ventured the proposal to slope towards Notre Dame instead of keeping the appointment at the Place Royale, and so save the whole thousand crowns, instead of remitting five hundred of them to the noble lord. Whereat Procope reminded them of their pledged word.

"Gentlemen," he said gravely, "you forget that this would be to violate a treaty, to deceive a client! — No, our loyalty must be beyond reproach. We shall remit to the

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duke" (the great lord was a duke) "the five hundred gold crowns that belong to him, every one of them. But," he continued, seeing that the proposal excited some murmurs, "*distinguimus:* when he has pocketed them, and is forced to confess that we are honest men, nothing will prevent us from forming an ambuscade at the cemetery of Saint-Jean, by which I know he must pass; it is a deserted spot, and quite the place for an ambuscade. We shall treat the duke as we did the treasurer; and, as the cemetery of Saint-Jean is quite close to the river, both will be found, to-morrow, in the nets of Saint-Cloud. So, instead of one hundred and twenty-five crowns, we shall have two hundred and fifty each, which two hundred and fifty we may enjoy and dispose of without remorse, seeing we have kept our word faithfully to this good duke!"

The proposal was accepted with enthusiasm, and the plan carried out accordingly. Unfortunately, in their eagerness to throw the duke into the river, the four partners did not perceive that the duke was still breathing. The coolness of the water revived him, and, instead of going to Saint-Cloud, as Procope expected, he landed on the Quai de Gèvres, pushed on to the Châtelet, and gave the provost of Paris, who at that time happened to be M. d'Estourville, such an accurate description of the four bandits that they judged it prudent to quit Paris the morrow after, being apprehensive of certain legal proceedings, at the end of which, notwithstanding Procope's weighty knowledge of the law, they might have been forced to abandon a thing valued more or less by even the deepest philosophers; that is to say, life.

Our four rascals, then, had left Paris, each making for one of the four cardinal points. It was the lot of Procope to seek the north. Hence it is we have the pleasure of meeting him again, with pen in hand, in the grotto of Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise, selected by his new companions on account of his singular merit to draw up the important instrument we shall deal with in a moment.

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He who is holding a light for Procope is named Heinrich Scharfenstein. This unworthy follower of Luther, whom Charles V.'s ill-treatment of the Huguenots has driven into the ranks of the French army, along with his nephew, Franz Scharfenstein, at the present moment acting as sentinel outside, is of gigantic stature. Indeed, uncle and nephew are both colossuses, and are animated by the same soul and moved by the same spirit. Many pretend that this single spirit is not enough for two bodies each six feet high; but they are not of this opinion themselves, and are certain that things are quite right as they are. In ordinary life they rarely condescend to have recourse to any auxiliary whatever, be it man, or tool, or machine, in order to attain the end before them. If this end is to move some enormous mass, instead of investigating, like our modern scientists, the nature of the machines that enabled Cleopatra to transport her ships from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, or of the engines by means of which Titus raised the gigantic blocks of the Flavian circus, they bravely encircle the objects to be displaced with their four arms, knot a chain with their fingers of steel, incapable of being broken, make one simultaneous effort with the regularity that distinguishes all their movements, and the object leaves the place it has for the place it is intended to have. If the thing aimed at is to scale a wall or to reach a window, instead of embarrassing themselves, like their companions, with a heavy ladder, which hinders their march when the expedition succeeds, and must be abandoned when the enterprise fails, they go unencumbered to the scene of their operations. One of them — it does n't matter which — braces himself against the wall; the other mounts on his shoulders, or, if necessary, stands on his hands raised above his head. With the help of his own arms, the second attains an altitude of eighteen or twenty feet, — an elevation almost always sufficient to gain the crest of a wall or the balcony of a window. In battle it is always the same system of physical association: they march side by

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side, keeping the same step; but there is this difference, — while the one is striking, the other is plundering. When the striker is tired of striking, he passes his sword, or battle-axe, or club to his companion, just saying these words, "Your turn now!" Then there is a change of characters: the striker plunders, and the plunderer strikes. Moreover, their mode of striking is very well known and highly appreciated; but, as we have said, in a general way, there is more esteem felt for their arms than for their brains, for their strength than for their understanding. And now you know why one of them has been stationed as a sentinel outside, and the other is acting as a candlestick within.

As to the young man with black moustaches and curly hair, who is crisping his moustaches and combing his hair, he is named Yvonnet; Paris is his birthplace, and his heart is true to France. Besides the physical advantages we have mentioned, it ought to be added that he has the hands and feet of a woman. In peace he is always lamenting, like the Sybarite of old; a crumpled roseleaf wounds him; if marching is in order, he is exhausted; and he becomes dizzy if any one hints at climbing. When he is asked to think, he grows hysterical. He is as nervous and impressionable as a young girl, and this sensibility of his must be managed with the greatest care. In daylight he has a horror of spiders, and at night the sight of a toad will drive him out of his wits; while a mouse throws him into a fainting-fit. Darkness is equally repugnant to him, and only a great passion can enable him to get the better of this antipathy. However, we must render him this justice, he has always some great passion on hand; but he almost always arrives near his mistress, if the rendezvous is during the night, quite scared and trembling; and, in order to recover his composure, he requires as many reassuring words and attentions and caresses as were lavished by Hero on Leander when he entered her tower all dripping from the waters of the Dardanelles. It is true that as soon as he hears the trumpet, it is true that as soon as

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he smells the powder, it is true that as soon as he sees the standards pass, Yvonnet is no longer the same man: there is a complete transformation in him; there is no more languor, or dizziness, or hysterics. The young girl becomes a ferocious soldier; it is all cut and thrust then, and he is a regular lion, with claws of iron and teeth of steel. He who shrank from mounting a staircase to reach the bed-chamber of a pretty woman, clambers up a ladder, hangs by a cord, clutches at a thread in order to be the first to reach the wall. The combat over, he washes, with the greatest care, his face and hands, changes his clothes and linen, then gradually becomes the man we are now looking at, curling his moustaches, combing his hair, and flipping, with the end of his fingers, the impertinent dust that has fastened on his garments.

The man binding up the wound he has received in the biceps of his left arm, is called Malemort. He is a sombre and melancholy character, who has but one passion, but one love, but one joy, — war! an unfortunate passion, a love badly rewarded, a joy short and fatal; for scarcely has he had a taste of carnage than, thanks to the blind and furious ardour with which he throws himself into the *mêlée*, and to the little care he takes when striking others not to be stricken himself, he is sure to catch some terrible pike-thrust, or some awful present in the shape of a musket-ball; and then he groans lamentably, not at the pain of the wound, but at the sorrow he experiences at seeing others keep up the dance without him. Fortunately, his flesh heals easily, and his bones knit together with a speed that is marvellous. At the present moment he can reckon up twenty-five wounds, — three more than Cæsar! and he has a sound expectation, if the war continues, of receiving twenty-five new ones before that stroke which will put an end to his glorious and painful career.

The lean personage praying in a corner, and telling his beads on his knees, is styled Lactance. He is an ardent Catholic, and is afflicted by the neighbourhood of the two

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Scharfensteins; he is afraid their heresy may sully him. Obliged by his profession to fight against his brothers in Jesus Christ, and to kill as many of them as he can, there is no austerity he does not practise to counterbalance this stern necessity. The cloth robe he is wearing at present, like a kind of shirt, next the skin, is lined with a coat of mail; that is, except we regard the coat of mail as the stuff and the cloth as the lining. However this may be, in battle the coat of mail is on the outside, and so becomes a cuirass; when the battle is over, the coat of mail is on the inside, and becomes a hair-shirt. And, for that matter, it is surely a satisfaction to die by his hand; for the person killed by this holy man is sure, at least, of not wanting prayers. In the last engagement he slew two Spaniards and one Englishman; and, as he is in debt to them, particularly on account of the heresy of the Englishman, who cannot be satisfied by an ordinary *De Profundis*, he is crowding *Pater* and *Ave* on *Pater* and *Ave*, leaving to his companions the care of the purely temporal concerns they are absorbed in at the present moment. When he has settled his account with heaven, he will descend to earth and sign the document, not without the erasure and addition of some clauses rendered necessary by his tardy intervention.

The man resting his two hands on the table, and watching with an attention that never wanders — being, in this respect, the exact opposite of Lactance — every penstroke of Procope, is called Maldent. He was born at Noyon, his father being of Le Mans and his mother of Picardy. He has been foolish and prodigal in his young days; and so, now that he has attained an age of sobriety and wisdom, he will make up for lost time, and manage his affairs prudently. He has had a multitude of adventures, which he recounts with a simplicity that is not without its charm. But it has to be admitted that this simplicity disappears entirely when he and Procope debate some point of law. Then they realise the legend of the two Gaspards, — the one

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of Le Mans, the other Norman, — a legend of which they are perhaps the real heroes. However, Maldent gives and receives a sword-thrust bravely; and, although he has not the strength of Heinrich or Franz Scharfenstein, the courage of Yvonnet, or the impetuosity of Malemort, he is at need a comrade that may be relied on, and will not desert a friend in trouble.

The grinder sharpening the dagger, and trying the point of it on his nail, answers to the name of Pilletrousse. He is a thoroughbred freebooter. He has, turn about, served Spaniards and Englishmen. But the English are too great hands at a bargain, and the Spaniards are not the best of pay; so he has decided to work on his own account. Pilletrousse prowls about the highways; during the night, especially, the highways are full of pillagers of all nations. Pilletrousse pillages the pillagers; only he respects the French, who are almost his fellow-countrymen. Pilletrousse is a Provençal; Pilletrousse is even good-hearted. If they are poor, he helps them along; if they are weak, he protects them; if they are sick he nurses them; but, if he meet a real fellow-countryman, — that is to say, a man born between Mount Viso and the mouths of the Rhone, between the Comtat and Fréjus, — the latter can dispose of Pilletrousse body and soul, money and blood; *trou de laire!* you would think Pilletrousse was the obliged party!

In fine, the ninth and last, he with his back to the wall, and his arms moving this way and that, and his eyes raised to heaven, is named Fracasso. He is, as we have stated, a poet and a dreamer: very far from resembling Yvonnet, whom the darkness frightens, he loves those fine nights lit by the stars alone; he loves the craggy banks of rivers; he loves the resounding shores of the sea. Unfortunately, as he is forced to follow the French army wherever it goes, — for, although an Italian, he has pledged his sword to the cause of Henri II., — he is not free to wander according to his inclination; but what does it matter? To the poet everything serves for inspiration; to the dreamer everything

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supplies material for his dreams; only, distraction is a necessity for dreamers and poets, and distraction is rendered almost impossible in the career adopted by Fracasso. Thus often, in the middle of the fight, Fracasso stops suddenly to listen to the notes of a clarion, to view a passing cloud, to admire some fine feat of arms performed before his eyes. Then the foeman in front of Fracasso profits by this distraction to deal some terrible blow that awakes the dreamer from his dreams, the poet from his ecstasy. But woe to that foeman if, despite the advantage given him, he has taken his measures badly, and has not at once stunned our Fracasso! Fracasso is sure to exact vengeance, not for the blow received, but to punish the ill-bred person who has brought him down from the seventh heaven, where he was floating, upborne by the multi-coloured pinions of imagination and fancy.

And now that we have, after the manner of the blind old bard divine, made the catalogue of our adventurers, — some of whom cannot be quite unknown to such of our friends as have read "Ascanio" and "The Two Dianas," — we must recount the cause of their meeting in this grotto, and the nature of the mysterious document they are so anxiously engaged on.

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III.

IN WHICH THE READER MAKES THE MOST AMPLE ACQUAINTANCE WITH THE HEROES WE HAVE INTRODUCED TO HIM.

On the morning of this same day, the 5th of May, 1555, a little troop of four men, who seemed to form a part of the garrison of Doullens, had left that city by slipping out of the Arras gate, as soon as this gate had been, we will not say open, but half-open.

These four men, muffled up in long cloaks, equally serviceable for concealing their weapons and guarding them from the stiff morning breeze, followed, with all sorts of precautions, the banks of the little river Authie, until they reached its source. From thence they diverged in the direction of the little chain of hills we have already so often mentioned, continued their course, always with the same precautions, along its western slope, and, after a two hours' journey, at last arrived at the outskirts of the forest of Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise. There, one of them, who appeared more familiar than the others with the locality, took command of the little band, and, guiding himself at one time by a tree more leafy or more devoid of branches than its fellows, at another, renewing his acquaintance with a rock or a sheet of water, he at length reached the grotto to which we ourselves conducted the reader in the beginning of the preceding chapter.

Then he made a sign to his companions to wait a moment, looked with a certain anxiety at some grass that seemed freshly trampled on, at some branches that seemed recently broken, and, throwing himself flat on his stomach, and crawling like a snake, disappeared within the cavern.

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His comrades, who stayed outside, heard the echo of his voice; but the tones denoted nothing alarming. He was interrogating the recesses of the grotto; and as these recesses answered him only by silence and solitude, as the triple echo of his voice was the only sound he heard in response to his triple call, he soon reappeared at the entrance and made a sign to his comrades to follow him.

The three comrades did so, and, after some obstacles that were easily overcome, found themselves in the interior of the cave.

"Ah!" murmured the one who had so skilfully conducted them, with a sigh of heartfelt satisfaction, "*tandem ad terminum eamus!*"

"Which means?" asked one of the three adventurers, in a very pronounced Picard accent.

"Which means, my dear Maldent, that we are approaching, or have approached, the term of our expedition."

"Pardon, Monsieur Procope," said another adventurer, in a strong Teutonic accent, "but I don't very well understand Do you, Heinrich?"

"No, I don't understand either."

"And why the devil should you want to understand?" replied Procope, — for the reader has already guessed that the person addressed by Franz Scharfenstein was our legist Procope, or *Brogobe*, as we should have to write, if we proposed reproducing the impossible *patois* of our two Germans. "If I and Maldent understand, what else is required?"

"Ya," replied the two Germans, philosophically; "that 's all that 's required."

"Well, then," said Procope, "let us sit down and eat a bite and drain a glass, to pass away the time; and while we are doing so, I 'll explain everything."

"Ya, ya!" said Franz Scharfenstein; "let us eat a bite and drain a glass, and while we are doing so he 'll explain everything."

The adventurers looked round them, and, thanks to the fact that their eyes were growing accustomed to the dark-

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ness, which, besides, was less great at the entrance to the grotto than in its depths, they perceived three stones, which they drew close together, in order to be able to talk more confidentially.

As a fourth one could not be found, Heinrich Scharfenstein politely offered his to Procope, who was without a seat; but Procope thanked him with the same courtesy, stretched his cloak on the ground, and lay down on it.

Then bread, cold meat, and wine were taken from the wallets carried by the two giants; the whole was placed in the centre of the semicircle, of which the three adventurers formed the arc, and Procope, lying at full length, the chord; after this they attacked their improvised breakfast with a fury that showed their morning promenade had not been without its effect on the appetite of the feasters.

For nearly ten minutes nothing was heard but the sound of jaws grinding, with a regularity that would have done honour to machines, bread and meat, and even the very bones of the fowls borrowed from the neighbouring farmyards, and composing the most delicate part of the repast.

Maldent was the first to find his tongue.

"You were saying, my dear Procope, that, while eating a bite, you would explain your plan. The eating is more than half over, — at least, as far as I am concerned. Begin, then, your explanation. I am listening."

"Ya!" said Franz, with his mouth full; "we are listening."

"Well?"

"Well, it is thus, — *Ecce res judicanda*, as they say in the law courts."

"Silence, you Scharfensteins!" exclaimed Maldent.

"Why, I have n't said one word," replied Franz.

"Neither have I," continued Heinrich.

"Ah! I thought I had heard —"

"And I, too," said Procope.

"All right; some fox we have disturbed in his hole. Go on, Procope, go on!"

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"Well, then, you 'll have it in a nutshell. About a quarter of a league from here there is a pretty little farmhouse —"

"Why, you promised us a château!" observed Maldent.

"Goodness gracious! are n't you particular, now!" said Procope. "Well, then, agreed, I apologise. About a quarter of a league from here there is a pretty little château —"

"Farmhouse or château does n't matter," said Heinrich Scharfenstein; "the thing that does, is the booty we are likely to get there!"

"Bravo, Heinrich! that 's the way to talk! But this infernal scamp Maldent quibbles like an attorney. I will continue."

"Aye, continue."

"About a quarter of a league from here, then, there is a charming country-house, inhabited only by the proprietors and one male and one female servant — It is true the farmer and his workmen are living at some distance."

"How many do they all number?" asked Heinrich.

"Ten, or thereabout," replied Procope.

"My nephew and myself will give a good account of the ten. Eh, nephew Franz?"

"Ya, mein uncle," replied Franz, with the laconism of a Spartan.

"Well," continued Procope, "the affair is settled; we 'll spend the time till nightfall drinking and eating and telling stories —"

"Drinking and eating, particularly," said Franz.

"Then at nightfall," continued Procope, "we leave here just as noiselessly as we came; we gain the border of the wood, and creep along a sunken road, which I know well, up to the foot of the wall. There Franz will mount on his uncle's shoulders, or Heinrich on his nephew's; the one on the shoulders of the other will climb over the wall and open the gate. The gate open, — you understand, Maldent? the gate open, — you understand, you Scharfenstein? — the gate open, we enter."

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"Not without us, I venture to hope," said a voice two steps behind the adventurers, — a voice so strongly accentuated that it not only made Procope and Maldent start, but even the two colossuses.

"Treason!" cried Procope, bounding on his feet, and taking a step backward.

"Treason!" shouted Maldent, trying to penetrate the darkness with his eyes, but not stirring from his place.

"Treason!" cried the two Scharfensteins together, drawing their swords, and making a step forward.

"Ah! a fight. You want a fight? Well, I'm not disagreeable. Here, Lactance! here, Fracasso! here, Malemort!"

A triple howl resounded from the back of the cavern, indicating that those appealed to were perfectly willing to respond.

"A moment! a moment, Pilletrousse!" said Procope, who had recognised the fourth adventurer by his voice; "what the devil! we are not Turks or gipsies, to cut one another's throats in the middle of the night without trying to come to an understanding first. Let us have a light, so that we can see each other's faces, and so know with whom we have to do. Then let us arrange matters, if possible; if not, why, we can fight!"

"Let us have the fighting first," said a gloomy voice, which issued from the depths of the grotto, but really seemed to issue from the depths of hell.

"Silence, Malemort!" said Pilletrousse; "in my opinion, Procope's proposal is most acceptable. What do you say, Lactance? and you, Fracasso?"

"I say," replied Lactance, "that if this proposal may save the life of one of our brothers, I accept it."

"And yet there would have been something so poetic in fighting in a grotto, where the dead might also be entombed! but as we must not sacrifice material interests even to poetry," said Fracasso, dolefully, "I subscribe to the opinion of Pilletrousse and Lactance."

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"But I insist we have a fight for it!" growled Malemort.

"Now look here, you attend to your arm, and don't bother us," said Pilletrousse; "we are three against you, and Procope, who is a lawyer, will tell you that when three are against one the three always have the best of the argument."

Malemort gave vent to a roar of anguish at seeing himself miss such a splendid chance of getting a fresh wound; but he took the advice of Pilletrousse, and yielded to the judgment of the majority, although he by no means concurred in its soundness.

During this time Lactance and Maldent were each busy striking a light, and, as both bands were anxious to have a clear view of the situation, two pine torches, covered with tow and smeared with pitch, burst into flame at the same moment, and illuminated the cave and its tenants with their double glare.

We have explored the cave; we have made the acquaintance of its tenants. We have, therefore, no longer any need to describe the one or depict the other; all that remains for us is to describe and depict the fashion in which they were grouped.

At the back of the grotto were stationed Pilletrousse, Malemort, Lactance, and Fracasso; in front the two Scharfensteins, Maldent, and Procope.

Pilletrousse had kept his position in the van; behind him Malemort was biting his fist with rage; near Malemort was Lactance, with a torch in his hand, and trying to soothe his bellicose companion; Fracasso, on his knees, was, like Agis at the tomb of Leonidas, tying his sandal, in order, like that hero, to be prepared for war while invoking peace.

The two Scharfensteins formed, as we have already stated, the vanguard on the opposite side; about a yard behind them was Maldent; and a yard behind him was Procope.

The two torches lit all the circular part of the grotto.

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A single recess near the door, containing quite a heap of fern, intended, no doubt, to become the bed of the future anchorite, who might fancy the cavern for a home, remained in shadow.

A beam of light, gliding through the opening of the grotto, was making vain efforts to struggle with its palish tint against the almost blood-red glare cast by the two torches.

The whole formed a gloomy and warlike spectacle, and would have made an admirable scene in one of our modern dramas.

Our adventurers, for the most part, knew one another already: they had already seen what they could severally do on the field of battle; but there they were struggling against the common enemy, not making preparations for mutual slaughter.

Fearless as were their hearts, every man of them was not the less impressed by the seriousness of the situation.

But the one who took the clearest and most impartial view of the momentous issue was decidedly our legist Procope.

So he advanced towards his adversaries, without, however, passing beyond the line the two Scharfensteins traced.

"Gentlemen," he said, "we have been united in desiring to see one another, and our desire is fulfilled. It is something gained: you see us, and we see you; therefore both sides know their chances. We are four against four, but with us are these two gentlemen, — just look at them" (and he pointed to Heinrich and Franz Scharfenstein), — "which authorises me to say almost that we are eight against four."

At this imprudent gasconade, not only did one simultaneous cry burst forth from the mouths of Pilletrousse, Malemort, Lactance, and Fracasso, but their swords again leaped from their scabbards.

Procope saw that he had forgotten his usual tact, and had made a blunder. He tried to recover ground.

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"Gentlemen," he said, "I do not claim that even with eight against four the victory would be certain, when these four are named Pilletrousse, Malemort, Lactance, and Fracasso."

This sort of postscript seemed to smoothe matters down a little, though Malemort continued to growl under his breath.

"Well, come to the point, then!" cried Pilletrousse.

"Yes," answered Procope, "*ad eventum festina.* Well, then, gentlemen, I was about to say that, putting aside the uncertain chances of a combat, we ought to try to come to some arrangement. Now, we are engaged in a kind of lawsuit, *jacens sub judice lis est;* how shall we bring this lawsuit to a close? In the first place, by a pure and simple statement of the case; this will prove we have right on our side. Who got the idea yesterday of seizing the little farmhouse, or, as you prefer calling it, the little Château du Parcq? I and those gentlemen. Who left Doullens to put the plan in execution? I and those gentlemen. Who came to this grotto to arrange the proper course to be pursued during the approaching night? I and those gentlemen again. Finally, who has matured the plan, developed it in your presence, and so inspired you with the desire of becoming partners in our association? I and these gentlemen, of course. Answer, Pilletrousse, and tell us whether the conduct of an enterprise, without let or hindrance, does not belong to those who have had the priority both of the idea and its execution? *Dixi!*"

Pilletrousse burst out laughing; Fracasso shrugged his shoulders; Lactance shook his torch; and Malemort murmured, "A fight!"

"What makes you laugh, Pilletrousse?" asked Procope, gravely, disdaining to address the others, and determined to hold a parley only with the person who seemed for the moment to have become chief of the band.

"What makes me laugh, my dear Procope," replied the adventurer to whom the question was addressed, "is the

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profound assurance with which you set forth your rights, especially as this very exposition of yours, if we were to admit the principles on which you base it, does not leave you and your companions a leg to stand on. Yes, I admit that the conduct of an enterprise belongs, without let or hindrance, to those who have the priority both of idea and execution —"

"Ah!" interrupted Procope, triumphantly.

"Yes, but excuse me a moment; the idea of seizing the Château du Parcq, as you prefer to call it, came to you yesterday evening, did it not? Well, it came to us the day before yesterday. You left Doullens this morning to execute the idea? We left Montreuil-sur-Mer yesterday evening with the same object. You entered the grotto an hour ago? We have been here for the last four hours. You have matured and developed the plan *before* us, but we had already matured and developed the plan long before you. You intend attacking the farmhouse this night? We claim priority of idea and execution, and consequently the right to conduct the enterprise without let or hindrance."

And, parodying the classic manner in which Procope had finished his discourse, "*Dixi!*" added Pilletrousse, with not less coolness and emphasis than the legist.

"But," asked Procope, a little disturbed by the argument of Pilletrousse, "how do I know you are speaking the truth?"

"My word as a gentleman!" said Pilletrousse.

"I would rather prefer another security."

"On the faith of a freebooter, then!"

"Hem!" muttered Procope, imprudently.

The temper of the community was growing warm; the doubt expressed by Procope as to the value of Pilletrousse's word exasperated his followers.

"Well, then, a fight be it!" cried Fracasso and Lactance together.

"Yes, a fight! a fight! a fight!" howled Malemort.

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"Fight away, then! since you will have it," said Procope.

"A fight by all means! since there is no other way out of it," said Maldent.

"A fight!" repeated Franz and Heinrich Scharfenstein, drawing their swords.

And then, as everybody appeared agreed, there was a general drawing of swords or daggers, or else a seizure of axe or club; each looked his enemy square in the face, and with curses on the lips, fury in the eyes, and death in the hands, prepared to rush on him.

Suddenly the pile of fern heaped up in the recess near the entrance of the grotto was seen to move; a young man elegantly clad darted out, and with a bound beyond the circle of darkness, appeared in the circle of illumination, extending his arms like Hersilia in the picture of the "Sabines," and crying, —

"Down with your arms, comrades! I undertake to arrange this matter to the general satisfaction."

All eyes were turned on the new personage who entered on the scene in so abrupt and unexpected a fashion, and all cried in unison, —

"Yvonnet!"

"But where the devil have you come from?" asked Pilletrousse and Procope at the same time.

"You are about to learn," said Yvonnet; "but first return swords and daggers to the scabbards. The sight of all these naked blades sets every one of my nerves quivering horribly."

All the adventurers obeyed except Malemort.

"Come, come, comrade," said Yvonnet, addressing him directly, "what is the meaning of that?"

"Ah!" sighed Malemort, as if his heart were broken, "are we never then to have a little quiet cutting and thrusting!"

And he sheathed his sword with a gesture full of vexation and disappointment.

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IV.

THE DEED OF PARTNERSHIP.

YVONNET cast a look around him, and, recognising that, if anger was not entirely banished from the hearts of our adventurers, at least swords and daggers were returned to their scabbards, he turned alternately to Pilletrousse and Procope, who, as they remind him, have just had the honour of putting him the same question.

"Where have I come from?" he repeated. "*Pardieu!* a nice question that! I have come from that heap of fern, under which I threw myself when I saw Pilletrousse, Lactance, Malemort, and Fracasso enter, and from which I thought it time to get out when I saw them followed by Procope, Maldent, and the two Scharfensteins."

"But what were you doing in the grotto at such an hour of the night? for when we came here it was yet hardly daylight."

"Ah!" replied Yvonnet, "that's my secret, which I will tell you immediately, if you are very good; but, first, let us come to the main point."

Then, addressing Pilletrousse, —

"So, then, my dear Pilletrousse," said he, "it was your intention to pay a little visit to the Château du Parcq, as you are pleased to call it?"

"Yes," said Pilletrousse.

"And yours, too?" asked Yvonnet of Procope.

"And ours, too," replied Procope.

"And you were about fighting to settle the priority of your rights?"

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"We were about fighting," replied Pilletrousse and Procope together.

"Shame!" exclaimed Yvonnet; "comrades, Frenchmen, or, at least, serving the cause of France!"

"Faith, we could n't help it, as these gentlemen refused to renounce their claim," said Procope.

"We could not act otherwise, since these gentlemen refused to give way," said Pilletrousse.

"We could n't help it! we could not act otherwise!" repeated Yvonnet, mimicking the voice of the two disputants. "You could not help massacring each other; you could not act otherwise than cutting each other's throats, eh? And you were there, Lactance, and you saw the preparations for the slaughter, and your Christian soul did not utter a groan?"

"Yes, it did, and a heartfelt groan at that!"

"And that is all wherewith your holy religion inspires you, — a groan?"

"After the fight," returned Lactance, a little humiliated by the reproaches of Yvonnet, the justice of which he felt, — "after the fight I would have prayed for the dead."

"What a benevolent creature!"

"What would you have had me do, pray, my dear Monsieur Yvonnet?"

"Ah, *pardieu!* I would have had you do what I am doing, — I who am not a devotee, nor a saint, nor a swallower of *Pater Nosters* like you. What would I have had you do? Throw yourself between those swords and blades, *inter gladios et enses*, to speak after the manner of our legist Procope, and say to your misguided brethren, with that air of compunction which so well becomes you, the words I am about to say to them now: 'Comrades, when there is enough for four, there is enough for eight; if the first job does not bring in all we expected, we shall soon have another on hand. Men are born to aid one another on the rough pathways of life, not to encumber with stumbling-blocks the roads that are hard enough to make

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one's way over as it is. Instead of dividing, let us unite. What four cannot attempt without enormous risks, eight can achieve without danger. Let us keep our hatreds, our daggers and swords, for our enemies, and for ourselves let kindly words and courteous deeds be our only weapons. God, who protects France when He has nothing more pressing to occupy His time, will smile on our fraternal unity and give it a fitting reward!' This, my dear Lactance, is what you ought to have said and what you have not said."

"It is true," replied Lactance, smiting his breast; "*mea culpa! mea culpa! mea maxima culpa!*"

And, extinguishing the torch, he fell on his knees and began to pray with fervour.

"Well, then, I have said it in your place," continued Yvonnet, "and I add, The divine reward which Lactance would have promised, I bring, comrades."

"You, Yvonnet?" said Procope, with an air of doubt.

"Yes, I, who had the same desire as you, and even before you."

"What!" said Pilletrousse, "you, too, had the idea of entering the château we all have our eyes on?"

"Not only had I the idea," returned Yvonnet; "but, more than that, I have begun to execute it."

"Impossible!" exclaimed all his hearers, lending him, though, a closer attention than ever.

"Yes, I have a friend in the place, — a charming little soubrette, named Gertrude," he added, twirling his moustache, "who for my sake is willing to deny father, mother, and mistress; she is mine, body and soul."

Lactance heaved a sigh.

"And you say you have been in the château?"

"I left it this night; but you know how much I dread a walk in the night, particularly alone. Rather than spend three leagues in reaching Doullens, or six leagues in reaching Abbeville or Montreuil-sur-Mer, I spent a quarter of a league in making my way to this grotto, with which I was well acquainted, as it was the scene of my first assigna-

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tion with my divinity. I made acquaintance with the bed of fern, and had fallen asleep there, and had intended to acquaint the first of you I met with my plan, when Pilletrousse arrived with his band, and then Procope with his. Each came here with the same object. And this would have undoubtedly led to a tragedy, did I not judge it time to interfere, as I have interfered. Now I have to say to you: Instead of fighting, become partners. Why not enter the place by craft instead of by violence? Would you not rather have the doors opened for you than broken in? Instead of having to rummage for gold and jewelry, would you not prefer to have them put into your hands? Then, shake! I 'm your man! And to show how disinterested I am, I say, let us share. In spite of the service I am rendering you, I only ask an equal share. If any one has anything to say against this, let him say it; I am willing to listen!"

A thrill of admiration ran through the assembly. Lactance forgot to pray for awhile, and ran to kiss the hem of his jerkin. Pilletrousse, Maldent, and Fracasso grasped his hand. The two Scharfensteins almost choked him with their embraces. Malemort alone growled in his corner:

"There won't be a single thrust or parry. Ah, *dame!*"

"Well, now," said Yvonnet, who had been for a long time looking forward to just such an association, and who, seeing the opportunity within his reach, had no notion to let it slip, — "well, now, don't let us lose a moment! Here we are, nine blades who fear neither God nor the devil —"

"Oh, excuse me," interrupted Lactance; "we fear God!"

"Oh, yes, of course! It 's a way we have of speaking, Lactance; I meant to say, Here we are, nine blades come hither by chance —"

"By Providence, Yvonnet!" interrupted Lactance, again.

"By Providence, granted. By good luck, we have amongst us a legist Procope, and, by more good luck, he happens to have a pen and ink at his girdle, and, I am quite sure, also a stamp of our good King Henri II. —"

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"Yes, faith, I have one," replied Procope; "and, as Yvonnet says, it 's luck."

"Then let us come to the point. Draw up a deed of partnership, while one of us, stationed in the forest, and at the end of the path that leads to the grotto, may see that we are not disturbed."

"I will be the sentinel," said Malemort. "I 'll see to it that if Englishmen, Spaniards, or Germans are prowling about the forest, they 'll soon be dead men!"

"But, my dear Malemort," said Yvonnet, "that 's the very thing we don't want. In our present position, — that is to say, within two hundred yards of the camp of the Emperor Charles V., with a man whose ear is so finely and accurately trained as that of Monseigneur Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy, — we must not kill all that we should like to kill, especially as we can't be sure always of killing the right person. We perhaps only wound him; and the wounded scream like the eagles. Everybody hurries to the rescue of the wounded; and if this wood is once occupied, God only knows what will become of us! No, my dear Malemort, you must stay here, and one of the two Scharfensteins will mount guard. Both are Germans. If one of our sentinels is discovered, he can say he is a lansquenet of the Duke of Aremberg or a trooper of Count Waldeck."

"Better of Count Waldeck," said Heinrich Scharfenstein.

"This colossus is full of intelligence," said Yvonnet. "Yes, my worthy fellow. Better of Count Waldeck, because Count Waldeck is a freebooter, like the rest of us. That 's what you mean, is it not?"

"Ya; I mean just that."

"And is there anything wonderful in a freebooter like him lurking in this wood?"

"Nein; nothing wonderful at all."

"The only thing of importance is, that whichever of the Scharfensteins acts as sentinel does not fall into the hands of the Duke of Savoy; for he has little respect for highwaymen, and gives short shrift to marauders!"

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"Yes," said Heinrich; "he hanged two soldiers yesterday!"

"Three!" said Franz.

"Well, which of you is willing to act as sentry?"

"I," replied uncle and nephew together.

"My friends," replied Yvonnet, "such devotion is appreciated by your comrades. But only one sentinel is needed. Draw lots, then; a post of honour remains for him who has to remain here."

The two Scharfensteins consulted together for a moment.

"Franz has good eyes and good ears; he will be sentinel," said Heinrich.

"Good! let Franz go to his post, then."

Franz left the grotto, with his ordinary tranquillity.

"You understand, Franz? If you are caught by others, it does n't matter; but if you are taken by the Duke of Savoy, you are hanged!"

"No one shall catch me; make your mind easy," said Franz, tranquilly.

And he left the grotto to take the post assigned him.

"And the post of honour," asked Heinrich, — "where is it?"

Yvonnet took the torch from the hands of Maldent and presented it to Heinrich.

"There you are!" he said; "stand quiet, and don't stir for your life."

"I won't stir, you may be sure," replied Heinrich.

Procope sat down, took his paper from his pocket, and his pen and ink-bottle from his belt.

We have seen him at work at the very time we entered the grotto of Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise, — a spot usually so lonely, but now, by a fortuitous concurrence of circumstances, so strangely tenanted to-day.

We trust we have made our readers come to the conclusion that it was not a work very easily managed that Procope was devoting himself to between eleven in the morning and three in the afternoon of this 5th of May, 1555.

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And so, just as in a bill discussed in our modern parliaments, every one brought forward his amendments and clauses, and so forth.

The said amendments and clauses were passed by a majority of votes, and, it must be said to the honour of our freebooters, with a justice, decorum, and impartiality not often found in more pretentious assemblies.

There are really wrong-headed people who maintain, shameless calumniators that they are, that a code of law drawn up by robbers is likely to be more thorough and equitable than a code drawn up by honest men.

We pity the blindness of such people, just as we pity the blindness of Calvinists and Lutherans for their errors, and we pray to God to pardon both.

Finally, at the very moment when the watch of Yvonnet marked a quarter-past three, — watches were rare at the period, but our dandy adventurer had one, — finally, we repeat, at a quarter-past three, Procope raised his head, took his pen in his hand, and produced his paper. Thereat, feeling an emotion of joy, he could not help exclaiming, —

"Ah! it's done, and well done, — *Exegi monumentum!*"

At this announcement, Heinrich Scharfenstein, who had been holding the torch for three hours and twenty minutes, stretched his arm, as he felt rather tired; Yvonnet interrupted his oration; Malemort completed the bandaging of his wound; Lactance hurried through his last *Ave;* Maldent drew himself up to his full height, his hands still resting on the table; Pilletrousse sheathed his dagger, now sharpened to his satisfaction; and Fracasso awoke from his poetic reverie, satisfied with having captured the rhymes he had been in search of for a sonnet during the past month.

All approached the table, with the exception of Franz, who, leaving to his uncle the discussion of their common interests, had placed himself, or rather lain down, within twenty yards of the entrance to the grotto, with the determined resolution, not only of watching over his compan-

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ions, but of keeping out of the way of that rough justiciary, Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy.

"Gentlemen," said Procope, glancing at the members of the circle that had formed around him with as much regularity as the officer is accustomed to behold when he calls his soldiers to order, — "gentlemen, are we all here?"

"Yes," replied the adventurers in chorus.

"Then every one is ready to hear the document which we have drawn up in eighteen articles, severally and conjointly, and which is hereby constituted a deed of partnership thereunto founded and established."

The reply was affirmative and unanimous, Heinrich Scharfenstein, as a matter of course, answering for himself and his nephew.

"Then listen," said Procope.

And, after coughing and spitting, he began: —

"We, the undersigned — "

"Excuse me," interrupted Lactance; "I do not know how to sign."

"*Parbleu!*" said Procope; "as if it mattered! you will make a cross."

"Ah!" murmured Lactance, "that will make the pledge only the more sacred. Continue, my brother."

Procope resumed: —

"We, the undersigned: Jean Chrysostome Procope — "

"You have n't a low opinion of yourself," said Yvonnet; "you don't object to lead off."

"Somebody had to be first," returned Procope, innocently.

"Good!" said Maldent; "continue."

Procope continued: —

"Jean Chrysostome Procope, attorney-at-law, admitted to practice at the bar of Caen, as also before the court of Rouen, Cherbourg, Valognes — "

"*Corbleu!* I am no longer surprised at the business taking up three hours and a half, if you have given every one all his titles and degrees. What does surprise me is that you should have got to the end of it at last."

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"No," said Procope; "I have comprised you all under the same title. But, as the person responsible for the instrument, I judged it not only proper, but absolutely necessary to give a full exposition of all my titles, degrees, and qualities."

"Oh, I see!" said Pilletrousse.

"Ah! get on, will you!" growled Malemort. "We shall never get to the end if every fellow interrupts at each word. I want to come to the fighting, — that 's what I want!"

"Faith," said Procope, "I 'm not the one that interrupts, as far as I can see."

And he continued: —

"Jean Chrysostome Procope, etc., Honoré Joseph Maldent, Victor Felix Yvonnet, Cyrille Nepomucene Lactance, César Hanibal Malemort, Martin Pilletrousse, Vittorio Albani Fracasso, and Heinrich and Franz Scharfenstein, — all captains in the service of King Henri II. —"

A flattering murmur interrupted Procope, and no one any longer dreamed of interfering with the titles and qualities he had given himself, for each was busy in arranging on his person a scarf, a napkin, a handkerchief, any rag that could be made to look like a symbol of the rank in the French service he had just received.

Procope gave time for the murmurs of applause to cease, and continued: —

"Have hereunto set forth, resolved, and —"

"Excuse me," said Maldent; "but the deed is null."

"Null! How?" said Procope.

"You forgot only one thing in your deed."

"What?"

"The date."

"The date is at the end."

"Oh," said Maldent, "that is another thing; still, it would have been better if you had put it at the beginning."

"The beginning or the end 's all one," said Procope. "The Institutes of Justinian say, positively: *Omne actum*

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quo tempore scriptum sit, indicato; seu initio seu fine ut paciscentibus libuerit: which means: 'Every deed must bear its proper date; but the contracting parties are at liberty to place the date at the beginning or at the end of the said deed.'"

"What hideous gibberish your law Latin is!" said Fracasso, "and how far removed from the language of Virgil and Horace!"

And he began to scan lovingly those verses from the third Eclogue of Virgil:—

> "Malo me Galatea petit, lasciva puella,
> Et fugit ad salices, et se cupit ante videri."

"Silence, Fracasso!" said Procope.

"Oh, silence as much as you like," replied Fracasso. "But it is not the less true that, great a man as was Justinian the First, I prefer Homer the Second to him, and I would rather have made the Bucolics, the Eclogues, or even the Æneid, than the Digest, Pandects, Institutes, and the whole *Corpus juris civilis.*"

There was undoubtedly going to be a dispute between Fracasso and Procope on this important point, — and only God knows where it would have led the disputants! — when a kind of stifled cry was heard outside the grotto, and the attention of the adventurers was drawn to the direction whence it came.

Soon it was seen that the light of day was intercepted by some opaque body which interposed between the artificial and ephemeral glow of the torches and the divine and inextinguishable illumination of the sun. At last, a being whose species it was impossible to discern, so indefinite were its lines in the demi-obscurity in which it moved, appeared, and advanced into the centre of the circle, all making way before it.

Then only, by the glare of the torch which lit the distorted group, was Franz Scharfenstein recognised, holding a woman in his arms, with his huge hand pressed against her mouth, and doing duty as a sort of gag.

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Each waited for the explanation of this new incident.

"Comrades," said the giant, "here is a little woman I found prowling about the grotto; I caught her, and have brought her to you. What is to be done with her?"

"*Pardieu!*" said Pilletrousse, "release her. She won't eat the whole nine of us, perhaps!"

"Oh! I 'm not afraid of her eating the whole nine of us either," said Franz, with his enormous laugh. "Would n't I like to have the eating of her alone by myself, though! Ja wohl!"

And, as Pilletrousse had invited him to do, he set her in the middle of the circle, on her two feet, and withdrew to the rear quickly.

The woman, who was young and pretty, and seemed, by her costume, to be a respectable cook in some well-to-do family, gave a frightened glance around her, and then at each individual, as if to take stock of the company in the centre of which she stood, and which her eyes told her, at the first look, seemed rather mixed.

But her glance did not take in the whole circle, either; it stopped at the youngest and most elegant of the adventurers.

"Oh, Monsieur Yvonnet," she cried, "in the name of Heaven, protect, defend me!" And, trembling, she ran and threw her arms round the neck of the young man.

"Why!" said Yvonnet, "it is Mademoiselle Gertrude!"

And, pressing the young girl against his breast, to reassure her, he said, "*Pardieu!* gentlemen, we shall now have fresh news from the Château du Parcq; for this fair lady has just come from it."

Now, as any news promised by Yvonnet which should come through the mouth of Mademoiselle Gertrude interested every one of them to the extremest degree, our adventurers at once abandoned, for the time, their deed of partnership, and thronged round the two young persons, waiting impatiently until the emotion to which Mademoiselle Gertrude was a prey permitted her to speak.

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V.

COUNT WALDECK.

THERE was silence still for a few moments, after which Mademoiselle Gertrude, evidently reassured by the consoling words which Yvonnet whispered into her ear, at last began her story.

But as this story, at one time interrupted by her own excitement, at another by the interrogatories put to her by the adventurers, might not have, for our readers, the limpid clearness desirable, we shall, with their kind permission, substitute our prose for that of the fair narrator, and, grasping the entire situation, relate, as plainly as we can, the tragic event that forced the young girl to quit the Château du Parcq, and led her into the midst of the adventurers.

Two hours after the departure of Yvonnet, at the moment when Mademoiselle Gertrude, doubtless a little fatigued after her nocturnal conversation with the handsome Parisian, decided at last to leave her bed and go down to her mistress, who was for the third time calling her, a young boy named Philippin, the son of the farmer, about sixteen years old, entered the chamber of his mistress, quite scared, and announced that a troop of forty or fifty men, belonging, he thought from their black and yellow scarfs, to the army of the Emperor Charles V., was riding towards the château, after making his father, who happened to be working in the fields, prisoner.

Philippin, who was working himself some hundred yards from the farmer, had seen the capture, and guessed by the gestures of the soldiers and the prisoner that they were

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speaking of the château. Then he had crept along until he came to a path, which he saw would hide him from the view of the troopers, and ran like the wind to give his mistress notice of what was passing, and time to adopt the proper resolution.

The chatelaine rose, went to the window, and, in fact, saw that the troop was hardly a hundred yards from the château. It consisted of about fifty men, as Philippin had said, and appeared to be commanded by three leaders. The farmer was walking beside one of them, with his hands tied behind his back. The officer near whom he walked held the end of the cord, undoubtedly with the object of preventing the farmer from attempting to escape, or, if he should attempt, bringing him to a halt on the moment.

This sight was anything but reassuring. However, as the horsemen, who were hastening to visit the château, wore, as we have said, the scarf of the Empire; as the three leaders who rode at their head had crowns on the crests of their helmets and escutcheons on the breastplates of their cuirasses; as the orders of Duke Emmanuel Philibert with regard to pillaging and marauding were positive; as, in fine, there was no way of escape, especially for a woman,—the chatelaine resolved to receive the arrivals in the best manner possible. Consequently, she left her chamber, and, descending the staircase, went, as a mark of honour to her visitors, to receive them on the first step of the perron.

As to Mademoiselle Gertrude, her terror at the sight of these men was so great that, instead of following her mistress, as was perhaps her duty, she threw herself on Philippin, begging him to point out some retreat where she could hide during the stay of the soldiers in the château, and where he, Philippin, could come from time to time, and give her intelligence as to how the affairs of her mistress were going on; for they certainly appeared to be in a bad way at present.

Although Mademoiselle Gertrude had been a little rough

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with Philippin for some time, and the latter, who had vainly sought for the cause of the change, had promised to himself that, should she ever need his services, he would be in no hurry to offer them, yet was Mademoiselle Gertrude so beautiful in her terror, so seductive in her attitude of entreaty, that Philippin allowed himself to relent, and led Mademoiselle Gertrude by the private staircase into the yard, and from the yard into the garden, and there hid her in a corner of the cistern, where his father stored his gardening tools usually.

It was not likely that soldiers whose evident intention it was to devote their attention to the pantries and cellars of the château would search for her in a place where, as Philippin wittily said, there was nothing to drink but water.

Mademoiselle Gertrude would have liked to keep Philippin, and Philippin, perhaps, on his side, would have asked nothing better than to remain with Mademoiselle Gertrude; but the beautiful child was even more curious than timid, so that her desire for news got the better of her dread of remaining alone.

For more security, moreover, Philippin put the key of the cistern in his pocket, which at first disturbed Mademoiselle Gertrude somewhat, but, after due reflection, seemed, on the contrary, rather reassuring.

Mademoiselle Gertrude held her breath and listened with both her ears; she heard at first a great noise of arms and horses, shouting and neighing; but, as Philippin had foreseen, the shouting and neighing seemed to be concentrated in the château and its courts.

The prisoner was trembling with impatience and burning with curiosity. She had been at the door more than once, and tried to open it. If she had succeeded, she would very certainly, although at the risk of encountering some unpleasant mishap in the enterprise, have tried to hear what was saying or see what was doing by listening at the doors and looking above the walls.

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At last a step, as light as that of nocturnal animals prowling around poultry-yards and sheepfolds, drew near the cistern; a key was introduced cautiously, turned gently in the lock, and the door, slowly opened, was quickly shut after giving entrance to Master Philippin.

"Well?" asked Gertrude, before even the door was closed.

"Well, Mademoiselle Gertrude," said Philippin, "it seems they are, in fact, gentlemen, just as Madame la Baronne had surmised. But what gentlemen, good God! If you heard them curse and swear you would take them for genuine pagans!"

"Great heavens! what is that you 're telling me, Monsieur Philippin?" exclaimed the young girl, now quite scared.

"The truth, mademoiselle; nothing but God's pure truth! When the chaplain reprimanded them, they answered that if he did not keep a quiet tongue in his mouth they would make him sing Mass with his feet up and his head down, and the rope of the belfry about his neck; while their chaplain, a regular heathen with beard and moustaches, would read a service in which there were neither responses nor questions."

"But, then," said Mademoiselle Gertrude, "they are not real gentlemen, are they?"

"*Pardieu!* they are; and among the best in Germany, even! They were not ashamed to tell their names; and that, you must acknowledge, was no small bravado, after the way they conducted themselves. The oldest, a man of fifty, or thereabouts, is named Count Waldeck, and commands four thousand reiters in the army of his Majesty Charles V. The two others, who may be from twenty-four to twenty-five, and from nineteen to twenty, are his legitimate son and his bastard. Only, from what I have seen, — and the thing is not unusual, — he appears to be fonder of the bastard than of the lawful heir. The legitimate son is a handsome young man, with pale complexion, large brown eyes, black hair and moustaches, and I have a

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fancy he might be brought to listen to reason. The same can't be said of the bastard, who is red-headed, and has the eyes of an owl. Oh, mademoiselle, he 's a regular devil, that fellow! God preserve you from meeting him! The way he looked at Madame la Baronne! — It makes one shiver to think of it!"

"You don't say so?" said Mademoiselle Gertrude, who was evidently curious to know what kind of a look is that which makes one shiver.

"Oh, good God, yes," said Philippin, by way of peroration; "and it was thus I left them — Now I am going back for further news, and as soon as I have any, I 'll let you know."

"Yes, yes," said Gertrude, "go! and return soon; but take care that nothing happens to you."

"Oh, don't be afraid, mademoiselle," replied Philippin; "I never show myself except with a bottle in each hand; and, as I know where to find the best wine, the rascals have the greatest respect for me."

Philippin left, and shut up Mademoiselle Gertrude, who at once began to think within herself what kind of looks those are that make one shiver. She had not yet solved the difficulty, although she spent nearly an hour in trying, when the key turned anew in the lock, and the messenger reappeared.

It was not that of the ark, and he was far from holding an olive branch in his hand. Count Waldeck had, by threats and even ill-treatment, forced the baroness to surrender her jewels, plate, and all the gold she had in the château. But this had not satisfied them; and, after the first ransom had been paid, the poor woman, at the very moment she believed herself about to be rid of the noble bandits who had asked her hospitality, had been, on the contrary, seized, garotted, and locked up in her chamber, with the assurance that if in two hours she did not find two hundred rose nobles in her own purse or in that of her friends, the château would be set on fire.

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Mademoiselle Gertrude bewailed, according to all the rules of propriety, the fate of her mistress; but, as she had not two hundred crowns to lend her, and thus extricate her from her embarrassment, she tried to think of something else, and asked Philippin what that infamous bastard of Waldeck, of the red hair and terrible eyes, was doing?

Philippin replied that the bastard of Waldeck was doing his best to get drunk, — an occupation in which he was powerfully seconded by his father. The Vicomte Waldeck alone was preserving, as far as possible, his coolness in the midst of the pillage and the orgies.

Mademoiselle Gertrude had a furious craving to form some idea of what these orgies might be, and to see them with her own eyes. As to pillage, she knew that already, having been present at the sack of Thérouanne, but of what are called orgies she had no notion.

Philippin explained that it was a meeting of men who drank, and ate, and indulged in loose conversation, and committed every sort of outrage on any woman that fell into their hands.

The curiosity of Mademoiselle Gertrude was immensely increased by this picture, which would have made a heart less courageous than hers shudder. She therefore begged Philippin to let her out, if it were only for ten minutes; but he repeated to her so often and so seriously that by leaving she ran a risk of her life, that she decided to remain in her hiding-place, and await the third return of Philippin, before settling, finally, on what she was to do.

This she had done before the return of Philippin. It was, no matter what might happen, to force a passage out, gain the château, slip along the secret corridors and private staircases, and see with her own eyes what was passing, — any narrative, however eloquent, being always inferior to the scene it attempts to paint.

As soon as she heard, for the third time, the key turn in the lock, she prepared to dart from the cistern, whether Philippin liked it or not; but when she saw his face, she recoiled in terror.

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Philippin was as pale as a corpse; his lips stammered forth disconnected words, and his eyes had the haggard expression of a man who has just witnessed some awful and sombre event.

Gertrude wished to question him, but at the contact of this unknown terror she felt frozen; the paleness of his cheeks passed into her own, and, face to face with this gruesome dumbness, she became dumb herself.

The young man, without saying anything, but with that strength given by fright which is irresistible, seized her by the wrist and dragged her towards the little gate of the garden opening on the plain, stammering only these words, —

"Dead — assassinated — stabbed!"

Gertrude made no resistance; Philippin let her go a moment to shut the gate behind them, — a useless precaution, for no one dreamed of pursuing them.

But the shock received by Philippin had been so rough that the momentum impressed on him could not cease until his strength failed him. At the end of five hundred yards he fell, breathless, murmuring, in a hoarse voice, like that of a man in the last agony, those frightful words, the only ones he could utter, —

"Dead — assassinated — stabbed!"

Then Gertrude cast her eyes around her: she was not more than two hundred yards from the border of the forest; she knew the forest, she knew the grotto; it was doubly a refuge; besides, in the grotto she might perhaps find Yvonnet.

She was quite remorseful at the notion of leaving poor Philippin unconscious on the edge of a ditch; but she perceived four or five horsemen coming in her direction. Perhaps these men might be some of Count Waldeck's reiters; she had not a second to lose if she wanted to escape. She darted towards the forest, and, without looking behind her, ran, frantic and dishevelled, until she crossed the border of the wood. Then only did she stop, and, leaning

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against a tree so as not to fall, she cast her eyes over the plain.

The horsemen reached the place where she had left Philippin unconscious. They raised him up; but, seeing that he could not move a step, one of them laid him across the pommel of his saddle, and, followed by his comrades, transported him to the camp.

The intentions of these men, however, seemed to be good; and Gertrude began to think that the best thing for Philippin was to fall into such humane hands.

Then, no longer anxious for the fate of her companion, and having regained her breath in this halt, Gertrude began again to run in the direction, or rather towards the point she believed in the direction, of the grotto. She naturally went astray; and it was only at the end of an hour that she found herself, by accident, chance, or instinct, in the neighbourhood of the grotto, and within reach of Franz Scharfenstein.

It is easy to guess the rest: Franz stretched out one hand and encircled the waist of Gertrude, placed the other on her mouth, and carried her as if she was a feather, then set her in the midst of the adventurers in an altogether scared condition, until, reassured by the sympathetic words of Yvonnet, she was able to begin the tale we have just told, and which was received with a general cry of indignation by the adventurers.

But, let not the reader be deceived, this indignation sprang from an entirely selfish cause. The adventurers were not indignant at the little morality displayed by the marauders in connection with the Château du Parcq and its inhabitants. No; they were indignant at Count Waldeck and his sons having pillaged in the morning a château which they had reckoned on pillaging in the evening.

This indignation was succeeded by a general hubbub, which, in turn, was followed by a resolution adopted unanimously, to go into the open and see at once what was pass-

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ing in the direction of the camp, whither Philippin had been transported, and in the direction of the château, where had been accomplished the drama just related by Gertrude with all the eloquence and all the energy of terror.

But the indignation of the adventurers did not exclude prudence. It was then decided that a man of good will should begin by exploring the wood, and render an account of the present condition of things to the adventurers. Their action would depend on the motives for fear or security supplied by this exploration.

Yvonnet offered to beat the wood. He was, besides, the very man for the work: he knew all the turnings and twistings of the forest; he was as agile as a stag and cunning as a fox.

Gertrude broke into loud cries, and tried to prevent her lover going on a dangerous mission. But she was made to understand, without much ceremony, that the moment was badly chosen for the display of her amorous susceptibilities, which were likely to be anything but favourably appreciated by the rather practical people among whom she found herself. She was a sensible girl at bottom; she grew calm when she saw that her cries and tears would not only have no result, but might even turn out badly for her. Besides, Yvonnet explained to her, in a low voice, that an adventurer's mistress ought not to affect the nervous sensibility of a princess of romance, and, having placed her in the hands of his friend Fracasso and under the special guard of the two Scharfensteins, he quitted the grotto to accomplish the important mission which he had just undertaken.

Ten minutes after, he was back. The forest was perfectly deserted, and did not appear to offer any danger.

As the curiosity of the adventurers was almost as keenly aroused in their grotto by the story of Mademoiselle Gertrude as the curiosity of Mademoiselle Gertrude had been excited in her cistern by the story of Philippin, and as old

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freebooters of their stamp could not have the same motives of prudence as those that direct the actions of a beautiful and timid young girl, they left the cavern, abandoning Procope's deed of partnership to the guardianship of the genii of the place, invited Yvonnet to place himself at their head, and, guided by him, they directed their course towards the border of the wood, not without each making sure that his dagger or sword had not rusted in the scabbard.

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VI.

THE JUSTICIARY.

According as our adventurers advanced towards that point of the forest which we have said stretched out in the form of a lance-head in the direction of Hesdin, stopping within a quarter of a league of it, and separating the two basins of the plain already known to our readers, a thick copse succeeded the larger trees, and by the closeness of the trunks and the interlacing of the branches afforded still greater security to such as took advantage of its shade. It was, then, without being seen by any living soul that the little band made its way to the outskirts of the forest.

Nearly fifteen yards from the ditch that separated the forest from the plain, — a ditch which ran along the road brought to the notice of our readers in the first chapter of this work and forming a means of communication between the Château du Parcq, the camp of the emperor, and the neighbouring villages, — our adventurers halted.

The spot was well selected for such a purpose; a huge oak, remaining with a few other trees of the same height and the same size, to indicate the sort of giants that had formerly fallen under the axe, spread its dome of foliage above their heads, while, by advancing a few steps forward, they could take in at a glance the whole plain, unseen themselves.

All raised their eyes at the same time to the leafy crown of the venerable tree. Yvonnet understood what was expected of him; he nodded consent and borrowed Fracasso's tablets, containing one last, immaculate leaf, which the poet showed him, at the same time recommending him

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to respect the others, the depositaries of his romantic reveries. He planted one of the two Scharfensteins against the gnarled trunk, not to be embraced, even by that giant's arms, placed a foot on each of the German's hands, climbed to his shoulders, from his shoulders to the branches, and was soon seated astride, on a stout bough, with as much ease and security as is a sailor on the yard of the maintop or jib-boom.

During the ascent, Gertrude followed him with an anxious eye; but she had already learned to restrain her fears and repress her cries. Besides, on seeing the carelessness with which her lover took his station on the branch, the readiness with which he turned his head left and right, she knew that he was at least in no danger from one of those fits of dizziness to which he was liable when nobody was looking on.

But Yvonnet, in the mean while, with one hand shading his eyes, was looking now north, now south, and appearing to divide his attention between two spectacles equally interesting.

These multiplied motions of the head strongly excited the curiosity of the adventurers, who, lost in the depths of the coppice, could see nothing of what Yvonnet was seeing from the elevated region in which he was domiciled.

Yvonnet could understand their impatience, of which they gave many signs by throwing back their heads, questioning him by a look, and even venturing to cry, in suppressed tones, "What is happening?"

And among those who questioned by voice and gesture, we may be sure Mademoiselle Gertrude was not the least animated.

Yvonnet made a sign with his hand, which meant that if they waited a few seconds they should know as much as he. He opened the tablets of Fracasso, tore out the last blank page, wrote on this page a few lines in pencil, rolled the paper between his fingers, in order that the wind might not bear it away, and dropped it. All hands were stretched

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out to catch it, even the white little hands of Mademoiselle Gertrude; but it was between the huge paws of Franz Scharfenstein that the paper fell.

The giant laughed at his good luck, and, passing the paper to his neighbour, said, "Take it, Monsieur Procope; I don't know how to read French."

Procope, not less curious than the others to know what was passing, unfolded the paper, and amid general silence read the following lines:—

"The Château du Parcq is on fire.

"Count Waldeck, his two sons, and forty reiters have appeared in the plain and are taking the direction of the camp.

"They are about two hundred yards from the point of the wood in which we are hidden.

"So much for my right.

"Now another little troop is following the road from the camp to the château.

"It consists of seven men, a leader, squire, page, and four soldiers.

"As well as I can judge from here, the leader is Duke Emmanuel Philibert.

"His troop is nearly at the same distance on our left that Waldeck's is on our right.

"If the two troops march at the same speed, they ought to meet at the point of the wood and find themselves face to face at the moment they least expect it.

"If Duke Emmanuel has been informed by M. Philippin, as seems probable, of what occurred at the château, we are about to see something curious.

"Attention, comrades; it is the duke, beyond doubt."

Here the note of Yvonnet ended. It was impossible to say more things in fewer words, and to promise with more simplicity a spectacle which, in truth, was likely to be very curious, if the adventurer was not mistaken on the identity and intentions of the parties.

Naturally, therefore, the several companions drew near the outskirts of the wood with all sorts of precautions, in order to witness with the greatest possible comfort and

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the least possible danger the spectacle promised by Yvonnet, and for observing which chance had given him the best place.

If the reader will follow the example of our adventurers, we shall not trouble ourselves about Count Waldeck and his sons, whose acquaintance we have made already through the medium of Mademoiselle Gertrude, and, stealing across the left border of the wood, we, too, shall put ourselves in communication with the new personage announced by Yvonnet, who, indeed, is no less a personage than the hero of our story.

Yvonnet was not mistaken. The leader, advancing between his squire and page, and preceding a little troop of four men-at-arms, as if there was only question of an ordinary patrol, was really Duke Emmanuel Philibert, generalissimo of the forces of the Emperor Charles V. in the Low Countries.

He was the more easily recognised because, instead of wearing his helmet on his head, it hung on the left side of his saddle, its constant position, in rain and sun, and even sometimes in battle; from whence it was said his soldiers, seeing his insensibility to cold and heat and blows, gave him the name of *Tête de Fer*.

He was at the present time a handsome young man of twenty-seven, of middle height, but vigorously built, with hair cut very short, very clearly marked brown eyebrows, keen blue eyes, and straight nose. He had a heavy moustache, and a beard trimmed to a point; in fine, his neck seemed pressed down on his shoulders, as happens almost always in the case of the descendants of those warlike races whose ancestors have worn the helmet for many generations.

When he spoke, his voice had at once infinite sweetness and remarkable firmness. A strange characteristic of it was that it could ascend to the expression of the most violent menace without rising more than one or two tones; the ascendant gamut of anger was concealed in the almost imperceptible gradations of the accent.

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As a result, only his most intimate friends knew what perils awaited those imprudent enough to arouse and brave his anger, — an anger so carefully restrained that its strength could only be understood, and its extent measured, at the moment when, preceded by the lightning of his eyes, it burst forth, thundered, and pulverised like bolt from heaven. Then, the thunderbolt once fallen, the storm at once ceases, and the weather is again serene; the explosion over, the physiognomy of the duke recovered its habitual serenity and calm; his eyes their look of placidity and strength; his mouth its benevolent and royal smile.

As to the squire, riding at his right, with his visor up, he was a fair young man of nearly the same age and of exactly the same build as the duke. His clear blue eyes, full of boldness and energy, his beard and moustaches, fair, but with a warmer tint than that of his hair, his nose, with the nostrils dilated like those of a lion, his lips, whose plumpness and ruddiness the moustaches could not hide, his complexion, rich with the double colouring of health and exercise, — all indicated the possession of the very highest degree of physical strength. At his back — not girt to his side — hung one of those terrible two-handed swords of which François I. broke three at the battle of Marignano, and which, from their length, could only be drawn from over the shoulder, while at the saddle-bow was one of those battle-axes that had a blade on one side, was a club on the other, and had a lance-head at the end, so that it could, when occasion required, be used as a hammer to knock a man down, an axe to cleave him in two, and a poniard to stab him.

On the left of the duke was the page, a handsome lad of from sixteen to perhaps, though scarcely, eighteen, with blue-black hair, cut after the German fashion, as it is worn in Holbein's knights and Raffael's angels. His eyes, shaded by long velvety lashes, were endowed with that elusive shade which floats betwen chestnut and violet, and is only met in Arab or Sicilian eyes. His olive complex-

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ion, of that fine olive peculiar to the northern countries of the Italian peninsula, resembled Carrara marble, whose paleness had been longingly and amorously absorbed by a Roman sun. His hands, small, white, and tapering, managed, with wonderful skill, a little Tunis horse whose sole saddle was a leopard's skin, with eyes of enamel, teeth and claws of gold, a slender silken cord serving for bridle. As to his dress, at once simple and full of elegance, it was composed of a doublet of black velvet, opening on a cherry-coloured vest with white satin facings, and drawn in at the bottom by a gold cord supporting a dagger, the handle of which was a single agate. His feet, beautifully modelled, were shod with morocco boots, and came up above the knee, the hose of the same material and colour as the doublet.

In fine, his forehead was covered by a cap of the same stuff and colour as the entire exterior part of his clothing. A diamond agrafe held in front a cherry-coloured plume which rolled around it, floating at the least breath of air, and falling gracefully between his shoulders.

And now that we have introduced our new characters, we shall return to the action, which, interrupted for a moment, is about to unfold itself with still more vigour and firmness than before.

In fact, during this description, Duke Emmanuel Philibert, his two companions, and the four men of his suite were proceeding on their way, without hurrying or slackening their horses' steps. Only, when they approached the point of the wood, the face of the duke grew more sombre, as if he had a presentiment that some spectacle of desolation would meet his eyes, once that point was passed. But suddenly, on arriving simultaneously at the extremity of the angle, as had foreseen Yvonnet, the two troopers found themselves face to face, and, strange to say! it was the stronger of the two that stopped, nailed to the spot by a feeling of surprise with which a little fear was obviously mingled.

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Emmanuel Philibert, on the contrary, without indicating by a start, by a gesture, by a motion of his countenance, the feeling, whatever it might be, which agitated him, continued his course, riding straight up to Count Waldeck, who awaited him, placed between his two sons.

At ten paces from the count, Emmanuel made a sign to his squire, his page, and four soldiers, who halted with a regularity and obedience quite military, and allowed him to go on alone.

When he was just within reach of Vicomte Waldeck, who happened to be stationed as a rampart between him and his father, the duke halted in turn.

The three gentlemen saluted by raising their hands to their helmets; but in raising his, the bastard of Waldeck lowered his visor, as if to be ready for any eventuality.

The duke replied to the triple salutation by an inclination of his bare head.

Then, addressing Vicomte Waldeck in that dulcet voice that made a harmony of his words, —

"Vicomte," he said, "you are a brave and worthy gentleman, one of those gentlemen whom I love, and whom my august master, the Emperor Charles V., loves. I have been a long time thinking of doing something for you; but a quarter of an hour ago the opportunity has presented itself, and I have seized it. I have just been informed that a company of a hundred and twenty lances which I have ordered to be levied, by command of his Majesty the Emperor, on the left bank of the Rhine, is assembled at Spires; I have named you captain of this company."

"Monseigneur —" stammered the young man, astonished, and blushing with pleasure.

"Here is your commission, signed by me, and sealed with the seal of the Empire," continued the duke, drawing from his breast a parchment which he presented to the viscount; "take it, set out on the very instant, and without a minute's delay. Go, M. le Vicomte de Waldeck; show yourself worthy of the favour granted you, and God keep you!"

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The favour was, in fact, great. And so the young man, obedient to the order given him to set out at once, immediately took leave of his father and brother, and, turning to Emmanuel, —

"Monseigneur," said he, "you are truly a *justiciary*, as you are called, for evil as well as for good, for the wicked man as well as for the good man. You have had confidence in me; that confidence shall be justified. Adieu, monseigneur." And, spurring his horse to a gallop, the young man disappeared at a corner of the wood.

Emmanuel Philibert followed him with his eyes until he was entirely out of sight. Then, turning round, and fixing a severe look on Count Waldeck, —

"And now it is your turn, M. le Comte!" he said.

"Monseigneur," interrupted the count, "let me first thank your Highness for the favour you have just granted my son."

"The favour I have granted Vicomte Waldeck does not deserve thanks," coldly replied Emmanuel, "since he has merited it. But you heard what he said: I am a justiciary for evil as well as for good, for the wicked man as well as for the good man. Surrender your sword, M. le Comte!"

The count started, and, in an accent that clearly indicated he would not easily obey the order just given him, —

"Surrender my sword! And why?"

"You know my orders forbidding pillage and marauding, under penalty of the lash for the common soldiers, and court-martial or imprisonment for the officers. You have violated my orders by forcibly entering the Château du Parcq, in spite of the protest of your eldest son, and stealing the gold, jewelry, and plate of the chatelaine inhabiting it. You are a marauder and a pillager; surrender your sword, M. le Comte de Waldeck!"

The duke pronounced these words without the tone of his voice visibly changing, except for his squire and page, who, beginning to comprehend the situation, looked at each other with a certain anxiety.

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Count Waldeck turned pale; but, as we have said, it was difficult for a stranger to guess by the sound of Emmanuel Philibert's voice the menacing nature of his anger or his justice.

"My sword, monseigneur?" said Waldeck. "Oh! I must have committed some other misdeed? A gentleman does not surrender his sword for such a trifle!" And he tried to laugh disdainfully.

"Yes, monsieur, yes," returned Emmanuel, "you have committed something else; but for the honour of the German nobility I was silent about it. Do you wish me to speak? Be it so; then listen. It did not suffice you to rob the mistress of the house of her gold and jewelry and plate; you had her tied to the foot of her bed, and you said to her, 'If, in two hours, you do not put two hundred rose nobles in our hands, I shall set fire to your château!' You said this; and as, at the end of the two hours, the poor woman, who had given you her last pistole, found it impossible to hand over the sum demanded, in spite of the prayers of your eldest son, you set fire to the farm-buildings, in order that the unhappy victim might have time to make her own reflections before the fire gained the château. Hold! you will not attempt to say this is untrue: the smoke and flame can be seen from here. You are an incendiary; surrender your sword, M. le Comte!"

The count ground his teeth, for he was beginning to comprehend the extent of the resolution in the calm, but firm words of the duke.

"Since you are so well informed as to the beginning, monseigneur," he said, "you are no doubt equally so as to the end?"

"You are right, monsieur, I know everything; but I wanted to spare you the cord, which you deserve."

"Monseigneur!" cried Waldeck, in a menacing tone.

"Silence, monsieur!" said Emmanuel Philibert; "respect your accuser, and tremble before your judge! The end? I am about to tell it to you. By the glare of

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the flame already mounting into the air, your bastard, who had the key of the room in which the prisoner was garotted, entered that room. The unfortunate woman had not cried on seeing the fire approaching her; that was only death. She cried on seeing your bastard advance and seize her in his arms, for that was dishonour! Vicomte Waldeck heard these cries, and ran up. He summoned his brother to restore the woman he was outraging to liberty; but instead of answering the appeal, he flung his prisoner, still garotted, on the bed, and drew his sword. Vicomte Waldeck also drew his, resolved to save this woman, even at the peril of his life. The two brothers attacked each other furiously, for there had been bitter hate between them for a long time. You then entered, and, believing your sons to be fighting for the possession of this woman, 'The fairest woman in the world,' you said, 'is not worth a single drop of blood from the veins of a soldier. Sheathe your swords, boys; I will make you friends again.' Then both the brothers lowered their weapons at your command; you stepped between them; both followed you with their eyes, for they did not know what you were about to do. You approached the woman, and before either of your sons had time to prevent the infamous deed, you drew your dagger and plunged it in her breast. Do not say that this is not so; do not say that this is not true; your dagger is still wet and your hands are still bloody. You are an assassin; surrender your sword, Count Waldeck!"

"That is easily said, monseigneur," replied the count; "but a Waldeck would not surrender you his sword, prince though you be, even if he stood alone against you seven; for a stronger reason, he will not, when he has his son on his right and forty soldiers at his back."

"Then," said Emmanuel, with a slight change in his voice, "if you will not surrender it voluntarily, I must take it by force." And, with a single bound, his horse was side by side with Count Waldeck's.

The latter was pressed too close to be able to draw his

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sword; he reached his hand to his holsters; but, before he could open them, Emmanuel Philibert had plunged his hand in his, which were open beforehand, and drew a pistol, ready loaded, from them.

The movement was so rapid that neither the bastard of Waldeck, nor the squire, nor the page of the duke, nor Count Waldeck himself foresaw it. Emmanuel Philibert, with a hand steady and sure as that of justice, discharged it at such close quarters that he burned the count's face, as well as blew out his brains.

The count had hardly time to utter a cry; he opened his arms, fell back slowly on the croup of his horse, like an athlete whom some invisible wrestler was bending backward, lost the spur from his left foot, then from his right, and rolled heavily on the ground.

The justiciary had done justice: the count was killed on the spot.

During all the time the scene lasted, the bastard of Waldeck, entirely sheathed in his iron mail, had remained as motionless as an equestrian statue; but when he heard the pistol-shot and saw his father fall, he uttered a hoarse cry of rage, which was further roughened through the visor of his helmet. Then, addressing the stupefied and frightened reiters, —

"Help, comrades!" he shouted in German; "this man is not one of us. Death! death to Duke Emmanuel Philibert!"

But the only reply of the reiters was a shake of the head in sign of refusal.

"Ah!" cried the young man, allowing himself to grow more and more enraged, — "ah! you do not listen to me! You refuse to avenge one who loved you as his children, who loaded you with gold, who gorged you with booty! Well, then, I will avenge him, since you are ingrates and cowards!"

And he drew his sword, about to rush upon the duke. But two reiters jumped to the head of his horse, seizing the rein on each side of the bit, while a third clasped him in his arms.

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The young man struggled furiously, overwhelming those who held him with insults.

The duke gazed on the spectacle with a certain pity; he understood the despair of this son who had just seen his father fall at his feet.

"Your Highness," said the reiters, "what orders have you to give regarding this man, and what are we to do with him?"

"Let him go free," said the duke. "He threatened me. If I arrested him, he might believe I was afraid."

The reiters tore the sword from the hands of the bastard and left him free.

The young man spurred his horse, which, at a single bound cleared the distance between him and Emmanuel Philibert.

The latter awaited him with his hand on the trigger of his second pistol.

"Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, Prince of Piedmont," cried the bastard of Waldeck, extending his hand towards him threateningly, "you understand, do you not, that from this day there is between me and you mortal hatred? Emmanuel Philibert, you have slain my father." He lowered his visor. "Look well at my face, and every time you see it again, by night or by day, at festival or in battle, woe to you, Emmanuel Philibert!"

And he set out at full gallop, shaking his hand, as if to hurl one more malediction at the duke, and crying again, for the last time, "Woe!"

"Wretch!" shouted the squire of Emmanuel, spurring his horse, in order to pursue him.

But the duke, making an imperative sign with his hand, —

"Not a step further, Scianca-Ferro!" he said; "I forbid you!"

Then, turning to his page, who, pale as death, seemed ready to drop from the saddle, —

"What is the matter, Leone?" he said, approaching, and

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offering his hand. "In truth, seeing you thus, wan and trembling, one would take you for a woman!"

"Oh, my beloved duke," murmured the page, "say again that you are not wounded, or I die —"

"Child!" said the duke, "am I not under the hand of God?"

Then, addressing the reiters, —

"My friends," he said, pointing to the dead body of Count Waldeck, "give this man Christian burial, and let the justice I have executed on him be to you a proof that in my eyes, as in those of the Lord, there are neither great nor little."

And making a sign of the head to Scianca-Ferro and Leone, he took the road to the camp with them, without any trace remaining on his countenance of the terrible event that had just taken place, except that the usual thoughtful furrow on his forehead seemed a little more deepened than customarily.

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VII.

HISTORY AND ROMANCE.

WHILE the adventurers, visible witnesses of the catastrophe we have related, after casting a melancholy glance on the smoking ruins of the Château du Parcq, are regaining their grotto, where they will put their signatures to the deed of partnership, become useless for the present, but likely to bear the most marvellous results in the future for their nascent association; while the reiters, obedient to the order given, or rather to the recommendation made, to procure Christian sepulture for their dead leader, are about to dig the grave of him who, having received the punishment of his crime on earth, rests now in the hope of divine mercy; while, in fine, Emmanuel Philibert reaches his tent with his squire and page on each side of him, — let us, abandoning the prologue, *mise en scène*, and secondary characters of our drama for the real action and principal characters about to come on the stage, let us venture, in order to give the reader a more ample knowledge of their disposition and moral and political situation, on an excursion at once historical for some, and romantic for others, into the domain of the past, that splendid realm of the poet and historian, which no revolution can wrest from them.

Emmanuel Philibert, third son of Charles III. the Good and Beatrix of Portugal, was born in the castle of Chambéry on the 8th of July, 1528.

He received his double name Emmanuel Philibert for the following reasons: Emmanuel, in honour of his maternal grandfather Emmanuel, King of Portugal, and Philibert,

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in virtue of a vow made by his father to Saint Philibert of Tournus.

He was born at four in the afternoon, and appeared so weak at his entrance into life that the respiration of the infant was supported solely by the breath introduced into his lungs by one of the women of his mother; and until he was three years old he remained with his head inclined on his breast, and was unable to stand on his legs. So, when his horoscope was drawn, as was then customary at the birth of every prince, and it was predicted that the new-born child was to be a great warrior, and glorify the house of Savoy with a splendour brighter than it had received from Peter, surnamed the Little Charlemagne, or Amadeus V., called the Great, or Amadeus VI., vulgarly styled the *Green Count*, his mother could not help shedding tears, and his father, a resigned and pious prince, saying, with a shake of the head and an expression of doubt, to the mathematician who made the prediction: —

"May God hear you, my friend!"

Emmanuel Philibert was the nephew of Charles V. by his mother Beatrix of Portugal, the fairest and most accomplished princess of her time, and cousin of François I., by his aunt, Louise of Savoy, under whose pillow the Connétable de Bourbon claimed to have left the cordon of the Order of the Holy Ghost, which François I. ordered him to return.

Another of his aunts was that vivacious Margaret of Austria, who left a collection of songs in manuscript still to be seen in the national library of France, and who, when attacked by a storm at the time she was going to Spain to marry the son of Ferdinand and Isabella, after having been betrothed to the dauphin of France and to the King of England, made, under the impression she was going to die, this curious epitaph on herself: —

> "Weep, Loves, the fate of Margaret here laid,
> Who thrice betrothèd was, yet died a maid."

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Portrait of Emmanuel Philibert.

Photo-Etching. — From an old Print.

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As to Emmanuel Philibert, he was, as we have said, so weak that, in spite of the prediction of the astrologer that he would be a powerful warrior, his father destined him for the church. So, at the age of three, he was sent to Bologna to kiss the feet of Pope Clement VII., who, coming thither to give the crown to his uncle, the Emperor Charles V., and on the recommendation of the latter, the young prince obtained the promise of a cardinal's hat. Hence his surname of the Cardinalin, given him in childhood, and which used to enrage him.

Why should this name enrage the child? We are about to see.

The reader remembers that woman, or rather that friend, of the Duchess of Savoy, who had breathed life into the little Emmanuel Philibert an hour after his birth, and just as he was about to expire. Six months before, she had had a son who came into the world as strong and vigorous as that of the duchess had come weak and languishing. Now, the duchess, seeing her son thus saved, said to her:

"My dear Lucrezia, this child is now as much yours as mine; I give him to you. Take him, nourish him with your milk as you have nourished him with your breath, and I shall owe you more than even he does; for he will only owe you life, but I shall owe you my child!"

Lucrezia received the child, of whom she was now made the mother, as a sacred trust. And yet it looked as if this must work some injury to the little Rinaldo — it was the name of her own son — if the heir of the Duke of Savoy was to recover life and strength by depriving his foster-brother of a portion of that nutriment which was his due.

But Rinaldo at six months was stronger than another child would have been at the end of a year. Besides, Nature has her miracles, and the two infants drew life from the same paps without the source of the maternal milk being for a moment exhausted.

The duchess smiled as she saw, hanging from the same living trellis, this stranger child so strong, and her own child so feeble.

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For that matter, it might be said that little Rinaldo understood this feebleness, and had compassion on it. Often the capricious ducal baby wanted the pap at which the other was drinking; and the latter, a smile on his lips white with milk, gave place to his imperious foster-brother.

Thus the two children grew on the knees of Lucrezia. At three Rinaldo seemed to be five; at three, as we have said, Emmanuel Philibert hardly walked, and only with an effort raised his head from his breast. This was the time of the journey to Bologna, when Pope Clement VII. promised him the cardinal's hat.

It looked as if this promise brought him good fortune, and this name of Cardinalin won him the protection of God; for when he passed his third year, his health improved and his body grew vigorous.

But the one who in this respect made the most marvellous progress was Rinaldo. His most solid playthings flew into pieces under his fingers; he could not touch any one of them without breaking it.

Then his toys were made of steel, but he broke them as if they were china. And so it was that the good Duke Charles III., who amused himself with seeing the children at their games, called the companion of Emmanuel Philibert *Scianca-Ferro*, which in the Piedmontese *patois* signifies, *Brise-Fer*.

The name remained to him. And the remarkable thing was that Scianca-Ferro never used this miraculous strength except to protect Emmanuel, whom he adored instead of being jealous of him, as might perhaps have happened in the case of another child.

As to young Emmanuel, he envied very much his foster-brother's strength, and would have willingly exchanged his nickname of Cardinalin for that of Scianca-Ferro.

However, he seemed to gain a certain vigour from this companionship with a vigour greater than his own. Scianca-Ferro, bringing his strength down to the level of

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the young prince's, wrestled with him, ran with him, and, not to discourage him, allowed himself sometimes to be outstripped in the race and vanquished in the wrestling-bout.

All exercises — riding, swimming, fencing — were common to them. In all, Scianca-Ferro was the superior. But it was, after all, only an affair of chronology; and Victor Emmanuel, though holding back, had not yet said his last word.

The two children were inseparable, and loved each other like brothers. Each was jealous of the other, as a mistress might have been of her lover; and yet the time was approaching when a third companion, whom they would adopt with equal affection, was to mingle in their games.

One day when the court of Charles III. was at Verceil, on account of certain disturbances that had broken out at Milan, the two lads, in company with their riding-master, made a lengthy journey on horseback along the left bank of the Sesia, passed by Novara, and ventured almost up to the Ticino. The horse of the young duke was in front, when suddenly a bull, shut up in a pasture-field, breaking through the barriers by which he was imprisoned, frightened the horse of the prince. The animal ran away with him, crossing meadows, and leaping over streams, bushes, and hedges. Emmanuel was an admirable rider, so there was nothing to be feared; however, Scianca-Ferro rushed after him, taking the same course he did, and, like him, leaping over all the obstacles he encountered. The riding-master, more prudent, went round by a circular line, which was likely to lead him to the point the two young people were making for.

After a quarter of an hour's reckless racing, Scianca-Ferro, no longer seeing Emmanuel, and fearing he had met with some accident, called with all his might. Two of these appeals remained unanswered; at last he thought he heard the prince's voice in the direction of Oleggio. He turned his horse on that side, and soon, in fact, guided by

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the voice of Emmanuel, he found his comrade on the banks of an affluent of the Ticino.

At his feet was a dead woman, and in her arms a little boy, almost dying, of from four to five years.

The horse, which had grown calm, was quietly browsing the young shoots of the trees, while his master was trying to restore consciousness to the child. As to the woman, nothing could be done for her; she was quite dead.

She appeared to have succumbed to fatigue, misery, and hunger. The child, who had undoubtedly shared the misery and fatigue of his mother, seemed nearly dead from exhaustion.

The village of Oleggio seemed only a mile from there.

Scianca-Ferro set his horse to a gallop, and disappeared in the direction of the village.

Emmanuel would have gone there himself, instead of sending his brother; but the child clung to him, and, feeling that there was still a bare chance for its life, he did not wish to leave it.

The poor little thing had drawn him quite near the woman, and was saying, with that heart-rending accent of childhood, unconscious of its misfortune, —

"Wake up, mamma! please waken, mamma!"

Emmanuel wept. What could he do, poor child, now seeing, for the first time, the spectacle of death? He had only his tears, and he gave them.

Scianca-Ferro reappeared; he brought bread and a flask of Asti wine. They tried to introduce a few drops between the lips of the mother, — a vain effort: she was but a corpse. There was nothing to be done, therefore, except for the child.

The child, while weeping because his mother would not waken, drank and ate, and recovered a little strength.

At this moment the peasants, whom Scianca-Ferro had summoned, arrived. They had met the riding-master, who was quite scared at the disappearance of his two pupils, and led him to the place appointed by Scianca-Ferro.

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They then knew that they were acting for the young Prince of Savoy; and as Duke Charles was adored by his subjects, they at once offered to execute whatever orders Emmanuel might give with regard to the mother and child.

Emmanuel selected from among the peasants a woman who looked kind-hearted and good; he gave her all the money he and Scianca-Ferro had on them, took her name down in writing, and begged her to see after the mother's funeral and the most pressing needs of the child.

Then, as it was growing late, the riding-master insisted on his two pupils turning their horses' heads towards Verceil. The little orphan wept bitterly; he did not want to quit his good friend Emmanuel, for he knew his name, though not his rank. Emmanuel promised to return to see him; this promise quieted him somewhat; but as long as he could see him he continued to stretch out his arms towards the saviour chance had brought him.

And, in truth, if the succour sent by chance, or rather, by Providence, to the poor child, had been delayed even two hours, he would have been found dead beside his mother.

Notwithstanding all the diligence of the riding-master, the evening was far advanced when they reached the castle of Verceil. There had been considerable anxiety about them, and messengers sent in all directions. The duchess was preparing to give them a good scolding when Emmanuel began his story, relating it in his sweet voice, whose tones were instinct with the sadness the gloomy event had impressed on his soul. The story finished, no one thought of scolding, but rather of praising the children; and the duchess, sharing the interest felt in the orphan by her son, declared that on the day after the funeral of the mother, she would pay him a visit.

And on the day appointed, the duchess set out in a litter, accompanied by the two young comrades on horseback.

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On arriving near the village, Emmanuel could not restrain himself; he set spurs to his horse and rode at full speed to see the little orphan again.

His arrival was a great joy for the unfortunate child. It had been necessary to tear him away from the body of his mother; he would not believe she was dead, and never ceased crying, —

"Do not put her in the ground; do not put her in the ground! I promise you she will awaken!"

Ever since his mother had been borne from the house, they had to lock him up; he wanted to go and stay with her.

The sight of his saviour consoled him a little.

Emmanuel told him his mother desired to see him, and was about to arrive.

"And you have a mamma also?" said the orphan. "Oh, I shall pray to God not to let her go to sleep so as not to waken any more!"

It was great news that Emmanuel gave the peasants, — this coming of the duchess into their house; and as they told it everywhere, people flocked from all quarters of the village in the direction she was coming.

So there was soon quite a procession, which arrived, preceded by Scianca-Ferro, who had gallantly remained to act as squire to the duchess.

Emmanuel presented his *protégé* to his mother. The duchess asked the child what Emmanuel had forgotten to ask him; that is to say, what was his name, and who was his mother.

The child replied that he was called Leone and his mother Leona; but he would not give any other details, answering to all the questions put to him, "I do not know."

And yet, strange to say, it was easy to guess that this ignorance was feigned and that it concealed a secret.

Undoubtedly, his mother, when dying, had advised him to only answer as he answered; and, indeed, nothing but

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the last recommendation of a dying mother could make such an impression on a child of four years.

Then the duchess studied the child with a curiosity altogether feminine. Although his dress was coarse, the hands were delicate and white; it was easily seen that a mother, and an elegant and refined mother, had taken care of those hands. At the same time, his language was that of the aristocracy, and he spoke French and Italian equally well.

The duchess ordered the dress of his mother to be brought to her; it was that of a peasant.

But the peasants, who had undressed her, said they never had seen a whiter skin, more delicate hands, or feet more small and elegant.

Moreover, one circumstance betrayed the class of society to which the poor woman must have belonged; though her garb was that of a peasant, rough shoes and drugget gown, she wore silk stockings.

Clearly she had fled in disguise; and of all her garments had only kept the silk stockings which betrayed her after her death.

The duchess returned to Leone and questioned him on all these points; but his constant answer was, "I do not know." She could not get any other reply from him. She recommended anew the poor orphan to the care of the worthy peasants, giving them double the sum they had already received, and charged them to make inquiries about the mother and child in the neighbourhood, promising them a liberal reward if they were able to give her any information.

Little Leone made the greatest efforts to follow Emmanuel; and Emmanuel was very near begging his mother to let him take him with him, so genuine was the pity he felt for the orphan. He promised Leone then that he would return to see him as soon as possible, and the duchess herself declared she would pay him a second visit.

Unfortunately, about this same period occurred events that

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compelled the duchess to break her promise. For the third time François I. declared war on Charles V., on account of the duchy of Milan, which he claimed to inherit through Valentine Visconti, wife of Louis d'Orléans, brother of Charles VI.

The first time François had won the battle of Marignano. The second time he had lost the battle of Pavia.

After the treaty of Madrid, after the prison of Toledo, after, above all, he had pledged his faith, it would have been allowable to imagine that François I. had renounced all claim to this unfortunate duchy, which, if won by him, would have made the King of France a vassal of the Empire. But it was quite the contrary; he was only waiting for an opportunity to lay claim to it again, and he seized the first that presented itself.

It was good, luckily; but if it had been bad, he would have seized it all the same.

François I., we know, was not scrupulous as to a violation of those silly delicacies that often hamper those donkeys known by the name of honest men.

The following, then, was the opportunity placed within his reach.

Maria Francesco Sforza, son of Ludovico the Moor,[1] was reigning over Milan; but he was reigning under the complete guardianship of the Emperor, from whom he had purchased, on the 23d of December, 1529, his duchy for two hundred thousand ducats, payable during the first year of his reign, and five hundred thousand payable in the two following years.

As security for these payments, the castle of Milan, Como, and Pavia remained in the hands of the Imperialists.

Now it happened that, towards 1535, a Milanese gentleman, whose fortune François I. had made, was accredited as ambassador of France at the court of Duke Sforza.

[1] Many historians believe that he derived his surname, *il Moro*, not from his swarthy complexion, but from the mulberry-tree in his coat of arms.

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This gentleman was named Francesco Maraviglia. Having grown very rich at the court of France, Francesco Maraviglia was at once proud and happy to return to his natal city with all the pomp of an ambassador.

He brought with him his wife and daughter, then three years old, leaving in Paris, among the pages of King François, his son Odoart, aged twelve years.

How did this ambassador come to offend Charles V.? Why did he invite Sforza to get rid of him on the first opportunity? This is unknown, and can only be known when the secret correspondence of the emperor with the Duke of Milan is discovered, as was his secret correspondence with Cosmo de Médicis. But, however, it happened that when there was an accidental quarrel between some subjects of Sforza and the servants of the ambassador, in which two of the former were slain, Maraviglia was arrested and conducted to the castle of Milan, held, as we have said, by the Imperialists.

What became of Maraviglia? No one ever knew for certain. Some said he had been poisoned; others, that, having missed his footing, he had fallen into an *oubliette*, the neighbourhood of which they neglected to warn him of. In fine, the most probable version and the one most believed was that he had been executed, or rather assassinated, in prison. The certain fact, however, is that he had disappeared, and with him, almost at the same time, his wife and daughter, without leaving a trace behind them.

These events had occurred quite recently, scarcely more than a few days before the meeting between Emmanuel and the dead woman and her abandoned child on the banks of a little stream. They were to have a terrible effect on the destiny of Duke Charles.

François I. seized the opportunity by the hair.

It was not the lamentations of the child beside him demanding vengeance for the murder of his father; it was not the royal majesty outraged in the person of an ambas-

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sador; it was not, in fine, the law of nations violated by an assassination, which inclined the balance to the side of war. No; it was the old leaven of vengeance fermenting in the heart of him who had been vanquished at Pavia and a prisoner in Toledo.

A third expedition to Italy was resolved on.

The moment was well chosen. Charles V. was in Africa fighting against the famous Khaïr-Eddin, surnamed Barbarossa.

But to accomplish this fresh invasion, it was necessary to pass through Savoy. Now Savoy was held by Charles the Good, father of Emmanuel Philibert, uncle of François I., and brother-in-law of Charles V.

For whom would Charles the Good declare himself? Would it be for his nephew? It was an important thing to know.

But it was suspected what his action would be; all the probabilities pointed to the Duke of Savoy being the ally of the Empire and the enemy of France.

In fact, as a pledge of his faith, the Duke of Savoy had intrusted to Charles V. his eldest son Louis, Prince of Piedmont. He had refused to receive the order of Saint Michael from François I. and a company of artillery with a pension of twelve thousand crowns; he had occupied the lands of the marquisate of Saluce, a transferable fief in Dauphiné. He refused homage to the crown of France for that of Faucigny. He had expressed his satisfaction at the defeat of Pavia in letters to the emperor. In fine, he had lent money to the Connétable de Bourbon, when the latter traversed his states in order to go and get killed by Benvenuto Cellini at the siege of Rome.

Still, it was necessary to be sure if the doubts were well founded.

With this object, François I. sent to Turin Guillaume Poyet, President of the Parliament of Paris. The latter was instructed to ask Charles two things:—

The first was a passage for the French army through Savoy and Piedmont.

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The second, the delivery, as places of security, of Montmélian, Veillane, Chivas, and Verceil.

In exchange, he offered to Duke Charles to give him lands in France, and to give his daughter Marguerite in marriage to Prince Louis, eldest brother of Emmanuel Philibert.

Charles III. deputed Purpurat, the Piedmontese president, to discuss matters with Guillaume Poyet, the President of the Parliament of Paris. The former was authorised to permit the passage of the French troops through the two provinces of Savoy and Piedmont; but he was first to parry diplomatically the demand for the surrender of the fortresses, and then, if Poyet insisted, to give an absolute refusal.

The discussion grew warm between the two plenipotentiaries, until at last Poyet, routed by the reasoning of Purpurat, exclaimed, —

"It shall be so, because the king wills it!"

"Excuse me," replied Purpurat; "but I do not find that law among the laws of Piedmont."

And, rising, he abandoned the future to the omnipotent will of the King of France and to the wisdom of the Most High.

The conferences were broken up, and in the course of the month of February, 1535, Duke Charles being in his castle of Verceil, a herald was introduced into his presence, who declared war against him in the name of King François I.

The duke heard him tranquilly, then when he had finished his warlike message, —

"My friend," he said in a calm voice, "I have rendered only services to the King of France, and I have thought that the titles of ally, friend, servant, and uncle might have met with a better return. I have done what I could to live on a good understanding with him; I have neglected nothing that could prove to him how wrong he is to be irritated against me. But since he will in no manner

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listen to reason, and appears determined to take possession of my states, tell him that he shall find me on the frontier, and that, seconded by my friends and allies, I hope to defend and preserve my country. The king my nephew knows, besides, my motto: 'Nothing fails him to whom God is left!'"

And he dismissed the herald, after ordering a very rich dress and a pair of gloves filled with crowns to be given him.

After such a reply there was nothing for it but to prepare for war.

The first resolution adopted by Charles III. was to secure the safety of his wife and son by placing them in the fortress of Nice.

The departure for Nice was therefore announced as very near.

Then Emmanuel Philibert decided that the time had come to obtain from his mother a favour he had delayed asking until now; namely, permission to take Leone away from his peasant home, where, for that matter, he had been left only provisionally, as it had been agreed to make him, as well as Scianca, a companion of the young prince.

The Duchess Beatrix, as we have said already, was a woman of judicious mind. Everything she had remarked in the orphan — the delicacy of his features, the fineness of his hands, the distinction of his language — led her to believe that some great mystery was hidden under the rude garb of mother and child. The duchess, besides, was a woman of religious heart; she saw the hand of God in this meeting between Leone and Emmanuel, brought about by an accident, — an accident almost providential, since it had no other result than to conduct the young prince to the dead woman and the expiring child. She thought that at the moment when her family was losing everything, when misfortune was approaching her house, and when the angel of darkness was pointing out to her and her husband and child the mysterious road of exile, it was not

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the hour to repulse the orphan, who, grown to manhood, would perhaps one day become a friend. She recalled the messenger of God presenting himself as a simple traveller on the threshold of the blind Tobias, to whom, by the hands of his son, he restored later joy and light; and, far from resisting the prayer of Emmanuel, at the first word he said, she anticipated it, and with the permission of the duke, authorised her son to transport his *protégé* to Verceil.

From Verceil to Nice, Leone was to make the journey with the two other children.

Emmanuel did not wait longer than the next day to announce the good news to Leone. At daybreak he descended to the stables, saddled himself his little Barbary horse, and, leaving to Scianca the care of the rest, started for Oleggio with all the speed possible.

He found Leone very sad. The poor orphan had also heard that his rich and powerful protectors were, in their turn, visited by misfortune. They had spoken of the departure of the court for Nice, — that is to say, for a country whose very name was unknown to Leone; and when Emmanuel arrived, breathless from his race and sparkling with joy, Leone was weeping as if he had a second time lost his mother.

It is through tears especially that children see the angels. We do not exaggerate in saying that Emmanuel appeared like an angel through the tears of Leone.

In a few words everything was said, explained, and settled, and smiles succeeded tears. There is with man — and it is his happy time — a period when tears and smiles touch each other as the night touches the dawn.

Two hours after Emmanuel, Scianca-Ferro arrived with the first equerry of the prince and two grooms, holding by the bridle the favourite pony of the duchess. A considerable sum of money was bestowed on the peasants, who had for six weeks taken care of Leone. The latter embraced them, weeping again. But this time tears of joy were

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mingled with tears of regret. Emmanuel assisted him to mount, and for fear any accident might happen to his dear *protégé*, he himself wished to lead the pony by the bridle.

Instead of being jealous of this new friendship, Scianca-Ferro galloped along quite joyous, going and returning, examining the route as if he had been a real captain, and smiling with that fine boyish smile that discloses the teeth and the heart at the same time, on the friend of his friend.

It was in this manner they arrived at Verceil. The duchess and the duke embraced Leone, and Leone was one of the family.

The next day they set out for Nice, which they reached without any accident.

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VIII.

SQUIRE AND PAGE.

It is not our intention, — God forbid! others having done it much better than we could, — it is not our intention, we repeat, to relate the wars of Italy, and write the history of the great rivalry that desolated the beginning of the sixteenth century. No, God has happily, in this case at least, assigned us a more humble task; but still, we must be permitted to say, a task more picturesque for ourselves and more amusing for our readers. We shall, therefore, see, in the narrative about to follow, only the summits of great events, which, like unto the topmost ridges of the Alps, lift above the clouds their peaks covered with eternal snows.

François I. broke through Savoy, crossed Piedmont, and spread over Italy.

For three years the cannon of France and of the Empire thundered, now in Provence, now in the duchy of Milan.

Fair plains of Lombardy, only the Angel of Death can tell how many corpses were needed to give you your inexhaustible fertility.

During this time, under the lovely sky of Nice, all azure in daytime, all flame at night, when the very insects of darkness are winged sparks, the children grew up under the look of the Princess Beatrix, and under the eye of God.

Leone had become an indispensable member of the joyous trinity; he shared in all the sports, but not in all the exercises. The too violent studies of the art of war did not suit his little hands, and his arms seemed to the

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masters of this art too weak ever to bear in martial fashion the lance or the buckler. It is true Leone was three years younger than his companions. But it appeared as if in reality there were ten years' difference between them, particularly since — undoubtedly by the grace of the Lord, who was reserving him for great things — Emmanuel had begun to grow in health and strength, as if he had set himself the task of gaining in this respect the distance in the race in which he had been outstripped by his foster-brother, Scianca-Ferro.

And so their respective offices fell quite naturally to the companions of the little duke. Scianca-Ferro became his squire, and Leone his page.

Meanwhile news came that Prince Louis, the eldest son of the duke, had died at Madrid.

It was a great sorrow for Duke Charles and Duchess Beatrix. But with the sorrow God gave them the consolation, if in truth there be any consolation for a father and, above all, for a mother, in the death of their offspring. Prince Louis had been for a long time a stranger to his parents; while, under the eyes of the duke and duchess, Emmanuel Philibert, who appeared every day to do more and more credit to the prediction of the astrologer, was flourishing like a lily, growing vigorous as an oak.

But God, who had doubtless wished only to try the exiles, before long struck them with a still more cruel blow. The Duchess Beatrix fell sick of some disease that exhausted all her vitality; and in spite of the art of physicians, and the care of her husband, child, and attendants, she expired on the 8th of January, 1538.

The duke's grief was deep, but religious; that of Emmanuel bordered on despair. Happily the ducal child had near him that other child who knew what were tears. What would have become of him without this gentle companion, who did not try to console him, and who was contented to mingle his own tears with his? — this was all his philosophy.

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Undoubtedly Scianca-Ferro also suffered from this loss; if he could have restored life to the duchess by going in search of some terrible giant and challenging him in his castle, or defying some fabulous dragon in his cavern, this paladin of eleven years would have set out on the very instant, and without hesitation, to accomplish this exploit; for though he lost his life in the enterprise, would it not give back joy and happiness to his friend? But this was the limit of all the consolation he could offer; his robust nature did not lend itself kindly to enervating weeping. A wound might make his blood flow; no sorrow would make his tears flow. What was necessary to Scianca-Ferro was dangers to vanquish, not misfortunes to endure.

And so what was he doing while Emmanuel Philibert was weeping, with his head resting on the shoulder of Leone? He was saddling his horse, girding on his sword, hanging his club from his saddle-bows, and wandering through that beautiful stretch of hills which borders the Mediterranean. Like a mastiff whose rage is excited against sticks and stones, which he grinds between his teeth, he was figuring to his imagination that he was dealing blows at the heretics of Germany or the Saracens of Africa, was making fantastic enemies out of insensible and inanimate objects, and, in defect of cuirasses to batter and helmets to cleave, was breaking rocks with his mace and splitting pines and oaks with his sword, seeking and finding a relief for his sorrow in the violent exercises suited to his rude organisation.

Hours, days, and months slipped by; tears were dried. The grief, living at the bottom of the heart as a gentle regret and tender memory, disappeared gradually from the countenance; eyes that searched in vain for the spouse, mother, and friend here below were raised to heaven, seeking for the angel there.

The heart that turns to God is very close to consolation.

Moreover, events continued their march, imposing on sorrow itself a powerful distraction.

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A congress had been decided on, to be participated in by Pope Paul III. (Alexander Farnese), François I., and Charles V. The subjects of discussion were: the expulsion of the Turks from Europe, the creation of a duchy for Louis Farnese, and the restitution to the Duke of Savoy of his states. The congress was to be held at Nice.

Nice had been selected by the Pope and by Charles V., in hopes that François I., in recognition of the hospitality received from his uncle, would be more ready for concessions.

Then there was also a kind of understanding to be brought about between Pope Paul III. and Charles V.

Alexander Farnese had given his eldest son Louis the duchies of Parma and Placentia, in exchange for the principalities of Camerino and Nepi, which he had just taken from him to give to his second son Octavio. This investiture was displeasing to Charles V., who had lately refused to grant the Pope, on the death of Maria Francesco Sforza in 1535, that famous duchy of Milan that was, if not the cause, at least the pretext of this interminable war between France and the Empire; and this he did, disregarding any amount of money offered, however large.

For that matter, Charles V. was quite right; the new Duke of Parma and Placentia was that infamous Louis Farnese who used to say he did not care to be loved, provided he was feared; who disarmed the nobles, flogged women, and outraged bishops.

The popes of the sixteenth century were not happy in their children.

The congress of Nice had then for object not only to reconcile the Duke of Savoy and the King of France, but also the Pope and the emperor.

However, Charles III., whom misfortune had rendered cautious, could not see without anxiety his nephew, his brother-in-law, and their holy arbitrator installed in his last fortified place.

Who could assure him that, instead of restoring the

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states that were taken from him, they would not deprive him of what was left to him?

At all hazards then, and for greater security, he shut up Emmanuel Philibert, his last heir, just as Nice was his last city, in the fortress that commanded the place, charging the governor not to open the castle to any force whatever, though this force came on the part of pope, emperor, or king.

Then he went in person to meet Paul III., who, according to the programme arranged, was to precede the emperor and King of France by some days.

The Pope was no more than a league from Nice, when a letter reached the governor from the duke, ordering him to prepare the *Pope's lodgings* in the castle.

This letter was brought by his Holiness's captain of guards, who, at the head of two hundred foot-soldiers, demanded to be admitted into the castle, in order to wait on his sovereign.

Duke Charles spoke of the Pope, but he had said nothing of the captain nor of his two hundred men.

The thing was embarrassing; the Pope was expressly asking what the governor was expressly forbidden to grant.

The governor assembled a council.

Emmanuel Philibert was present, although hardly eleven years old.

Without doubt he had been summoned there to give courage to his defenders.

While they were deliberating, the child perceived hanging from the wall the wooden model of the castle now likely to form a bone of contention between the Pope and Charles III.

"By my faith, gentlemen!" he said to the councillors, who had been disputing an hour without being the farther advanced for that, "you are very much embarrassed for a trifle. Since we have a castle of wood and a castle of stone, let us give the wooden one to the Pope and keep the stone one for ourselves."

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"Gentlemen," said the governor, "we have been taught our duty by the words of a child. His Holiness shall have, if he like, the castle of wood; but I swear by God, he shall not have, while I am alive, the castle of stone!"

The reply of the child and the reply of the governor were carried to the Pope, who did not insist further, and took lodgings in the convent of the Cordeliers.

The emperor arrived, then the King of France.

Each lodged under his tent on either side of the city, with the Pope between them.

The congress was opened.

Unfortunately the results were far different from what was hoped.

The emperor claimed, on behalf of his brother-in-law, the states of Savoy and Piedmont.

François I. claimed for his second son, the Duke of Orléans, the duchy of Milan.

In fine, the Pope, who also wanted to settle his son there, demanded that a prince belonging neither to the family of François nor of Charles V. should be elected Duke of Milan, on condition of receiving investiture from the emperor and paying a tribute to the King of France.

Each wanted the impossible, since he wanted the exact contrary of what the others wanted. Everybody, indeed, desired a truce,— François I., in order to give a little rest to his soldiers, who were half-exhausted, and to his finances, which were entirely so; Charles V., in order to repress the incursions of the Turks in his two kingdoms of Naples and Sicily; Paul III., in order to make sure of the principalities of Parma and Placentia for his son, since he could not establish him in the duchy of Milan.

A ten years' truce was concluded. François I. himself fixed on the figure.

"Ten years or nothing!" he said peremptorily. And ten years were given him.

It is true that he was the first to break this truce at the end of four.

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Charles III., who feared that all these conferences would end in the sequestration of the little territory remaining to him, saw his illustrious guests depart with more joy than he had seen them arrive.

They left him as they had found him, only somewhat poorer by the debts they had incurred in his states and forgotten to pay.

The Pope was the only one who pulled anything out of the fire; he had pulled two marriages, — the marriage of his second son Octavio Farnese with Margaret of Austria, widow of Julian de Médicis, who had been assassinated at Florence in the church of Saint Mary of the Flowers; and the marriage of his niece Vittoria with Antoine, eldest son of Charles of Vendôme.

Delivered from his anxiety with respect to François I., Charles V. made at Genoa his preparations against the Turks. These preparations were immense; they lasted two years.

At the end of these two years, when the fleet was on the point of sailing, Duke Charles resolved to pay a visit to his brother-in-law, and present his son Emmanuel Philibert, now entering on his thirteenth year.

No need of our saying that Scianca-Ferro and Leone were among the travellers. Emmanuel Philibert never took a journey without them.

For some time the young prince had been very much preoccupied. He was busied about the composition of a discourse of which he never thought of speaking to Monseigneur Louis Alardet, Bishop of Lausanne, his preceptor, nor to his governors, Louis de Châtillon, lord of Musinens, grand equerry of Savoy, Jean Baptist Provana, lord of Leyni, and Édouard de Genève, Baron of Lullens.

He was content with unbosoming himself on the subject to his squire and his page.

It was nothing less than a discourse embodying a petition to the Emperor Charles V. to allow him to accompany him on the expedition against the Barbary pirates.

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Scianca-Ferro refused his aid, saying that if it had been a challenge to carry, he would have been equal to the task; but as to helping in making up a speech, he knew his incompetency.

Leone refused, saying that the mere thought of the dangers Emmanuel Philibert would naturally run in such an expedition disturbed his mind to that degree that he could not begin to put together the very first words of such a petition.

The young prince found then that he must rely on himself alone. Therefore, with the assistance of Titus Livy, Quintus Curtius, Plutarch, and all the makers of discourse of antiquity, he composed the one he reckoned on addressing to the emperor.

The emperor was lodging with his friend Andrea Doria, in the fine palace which looks like the king of the port of Genoa, and was following the provisioning of his fleet, while promenading the magnificent terraces from which the splendid admiral, after dining the ambassadors of Venice, had flung his silver plate into the sea.

Duke Charles, Emmanuel Philibert, and their suite were introduced to the emperor as soon as they were announced.

The emperor embraced his brother-in-law, and was about to embrace his nephew also; but Emmanuel Philibert extricated himself respectfully from the august embrace, put one knee on the ground, and with the gravest air in the world, his squire and page at his side, without his father having even the least idea of what he was going to say, pronounced the following words: —

"Devoted to the maintenance of your dignity and your cause, which are those of God and of our holy religion, I come freely and joyfully to supplicate you, Cæsar, to receive me as a volunteer among that infinite number of warriors who are present from all quarters to range themselves under your banners; fortunate should I be, O Cæsar, to learn under the greatest of kings and under an invincible emperor the discipline of camps and the science of war."

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The emperor looked at him and smiled; and whilst Scianca-Ferro was expressing quite loudly his admiration at the discourse of his prince, and Leone, pale with terror, was begging God to inspire the emperor with the good thought of refusing the offer of Emmanuel's services, the monarch replied gravely: —

"Prince, I thank you for this mark of your attachment. Persist in these good sentiments; they will be useful to us both. But you are still too young to follow me to the wars. If, however, you are always moved by the same ardour and determination, you may rest assured that in a few years you shall not want for opportunities."

And, raising the young prince, he embraced him. Then, to console him, he detached his own order of the Golden Fleece and passed it round his neck.

"Ah, *mordieu!*" cried Scianca-Ferro, "that is something better than a cardinal's hat!"

"You have a bold comrade there, fair nephew," said Charles V.; "and we shall give him a chain in lieu of the cross we may bestow on him some time or other."

And, taking a gold chain from the neck of one of his lords, he threw it to Scianca-Ferro, saying, —

"For you, fair squire."

But quick as was the movement of Charles V., Scianca-Ferro had time to place a knee on the ground, so that it was in this respectful attitude he received the emperor's present.

"And now," said the victor of Pavia, "it is right that every one have his share, even the page."

And, drawing a diamond from his little finger, "Fair page," he said, "it is your turn."

But to the great astonishment of Emmanuel Philibert, Scianca-Ferro, and all the spectators, Leone did not respond, and remained motionless in his place.

"Oh, oh!" said Charles V., "we have a deaf page, it would seem." And, shrugging his shoulders, "Come forward, fair page," he said.

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But, instead of obeying, the page took a step backward.

"Leone!" exclaimed Emmanuel, seizing the page's hand and attempting to lead him forward.

But, wonderful to tell, Leone snatched away his hand, uttered a cry, and rushed from the place.

"There is a page for you who is not covetous," said Charles V. "You must tell me where you are able to get such, fair nephew. The diamond I wished to give him is worth a thousand pistoles."

Then, turning to his courtiers, "A good example to follow, gentlemen!" said Charles V.

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IX.

LEONE-LEONA.

All the efforts made by Emmanuel Philibert during their return to the Corsi palace, where he lodged with his father, could not induce Leone to tell, not only the cause of his refusal of the diamond, but the reason why, like a wild young falcon, he fled with a scream of terror. The child remained dumb, and no entreaty could draw a word from his lips on the subject.

It was the same obstinacy the Duchess Beatrix made vain efforts to triumph over when she tried to obtain from the child some information about his mother, which he constantly refused to give.

Only how could the Emperor Charles V. be concerned in the catastrophe that had struck the orphan page? This was what it was impossible for Emmanuel Philibert to divine. However it might be, he preferred to find the whole world wrong, even his uncle, rather than for a moment suspect Leone of inconsistency and levity.

Two years had passed since the truce of Nice. It was a very long time for François I. to keep his word. Consequently every one was astonished, and especially Charles V., who during his interview with his brother-in-law could not help feeling anxious as to what the King of France would do when he, Charles V., was no longer there to protect the poor duke.

And, in fact, scarcely had the emperor set sail, when the Duke of Savoy, on his return to Nice, received a messenger from François I.

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François I. proposed to restore Savoy to his uncle, provided the latter surrendered Piedmont and allowed it to be annexed to the crown of France.

The duke, indignant at such a proposal, dismissed the messenger of his nephew, forbidding him to appear again in his presence.

Who had inspired François I. with this audacity of declaring war a fourth time on the emperor?

It was because he had two new allies, Luther and Soliman, the Huguenots of Germany and the Saracens of Africa. Strange allies for the *most Christian* king, for the *eldest son of the Church!*

Singular thing! During this long struggle between François I. and Charles V. it was the one who is styled the *roi chevalier* that was constantly breaking his word. After losing everything *except honour* on the battle-field of Pavia, he inflicted on this same honour, which had remained untouched in spite of defeat, an ineffaceable stain by signing in prison what he had no intention of keeping.

And look at him now, this king whom historians ought to banish from history, as Christ chased the buyers and sellers from the temple,— look at him, this soldier knighted by Bayard and cursed by Saint-Vallier; as soon as he has broken his word, he seems hurled into insanity: he is the friend of the Turk and the heretic; he gives the right hand to Soliman and the left to Luther; he marches side by side with the son of Mahomet,— he, a son of Saint-Louis. Therefore, God, after sending him defeat, the daughter of His anger, sends him the plague, the daughter of His vengeance.

All this does not prevent him being styled in books, at least in those of the historians, the *roi chevalier!*

It is true we poets call him the infamous king, a perjurer of his word toward his enemies, a perjurer of his word toward his friends, a perjurer of his word to his God.

This time, as soon as the answer of the Duke of Savoy was received, it was Nice that he threatened.

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The Duke of Savoy left in Nice a brave Savoyard knight named Odinet de Montfort, and retired to Verceil, where he drew together the few forces he could still dispose of.

Emmanuel Philibert had solicited from his father the favour of remaining at Nice, and of making his first arms at once against Soliman and François I.; but the last heir of his house was too precious to the duke to permit of such a request being allowed.

It was not the same with Scianca-Ferro; permission was granted him, and he made good use of it.

Scarcely were the duke, his son, Leone, and their suite some leagues from Nice, when a fleet of two hundred sail was seen flying French and Turkish flags. It landed in the port of Villa Franca ten thousand Turks commanded by Khaïr-Eddin, and twelve thousand French commanded by the Duc d'Enghien.

The siege was terrible; the garrison defended itself desperately. Every one, citizen, soldier, and gentleman, performed prodigies of valour. A breach was made in the city in ten several places. They were entered by Turks and Frenchmen; then every street, every lane, every house, was defended. Fire kept pace with the besiegers. Odinet de Montfort retired into the castle, leaving to the enemy a city in ruins.

The next day, a herald summoned him to surrender; but he, shaking his head, answered: —

"Friend, you make a mistake in proposing to me such baseness. My name is Montfort; my arms are *pales*, and my motto, *Il faut tenir*."

Montfort was worthy of his motto, his arms, and his name. He held out until the arrival of the duke with four thousand Piedmontese, and of Alfonso of Avalos, on the part of the emperor, with six thousand Spaniards, forced the Turks and French to raise the siege.

It was high festival for Duke Charles and his subjects the day he returned to Nice, ruined though the city was. It was also high festival for Emmanuel Philibert and his

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squire. Scianca-Ferro had gained the name given him by Charles III. When his foster-brother asked him how it felt striking real cuirasses and real bucklers, "Bah!" he answered, "it is not so difficult as splitting oaks; it is not so hard as breaking rocks."

"Oh, why was I not there!" murmured Emmanuel Philibert, without perceiving that Leone, clinging to his arm, had turned pale in thinking of the dangers Scianca-Ferro had already run, and of those Emmanuel might run one day.

It is true that some time after our poor page was fully reassured by the peace of Crespy, the result of the invasion of Provence by Charles V., as well as of the battle of Cérisoles.

Peace was signed on the 14th of October, 1544. It stipulated that Philippe d'Orléans, second son of François I., should marry in two years the daughter of the emperor, and receive as dowry the duchy of Milan and the Low Countries; that, on his side, the King of France should renounce his claims to the kingdom of Naples, and restore to the Duke of Savoy what he had taken from him, except the fortresses of Pignerol and Montmélian, which would remain united to the French territory as places of security.

The treaty was to be executed in two years; that is to say, at the time of the marriage of the Duc d'Orléans with the daughter of the emperor.

As we see, we have now arrived at the year 1545; the children had grown. Leone, the youngest of the three, was fourteen; Emmanuel was seventeen; Scianca-Ferro, the eldest, was six months more than Emmanuel.

What was passing in the heart of Leone, and why was the young man becoming sadder and sadder? Questions vainly put to each other by Scianca and Emmanuel; questions vainly put to Leone by Emmanuel.

And, indeed, it was strange. The more Leone advanced in years, the less the young page followed the example of his two companions. Emmanuel, to make his surname of

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Cardinalin quite forgotten, and the squire to deserve more and more his surname of Scianca-Ferro, passed their entire days in sham battles; the young lads, with sword or lance or axe ever in their hands, were rivals in address and strength. All that can be won by skill in the use of arms, Emmanuel had acquired; all the force and vigour God can give to human muscles, Scianca-Ferro had received from God.

During this time, Leone would stand pensive on some tower from which he could see the exercises of the two youths, and follow Emmanuel with his eyes; or if their excitement carried them too far away, he took a book, retired to some distant corner of the garden, and read.

The only thing Leone learned with joy — and doubtless because he saw in it a means of following Emmanuel — was to ride on horseback; but for some time, as his melancholy gradually increased, he renounced even this exercise.

One thing especially that astonished Emmanuel was that at the idea he was soon to become a rich and puissant prince, the countenance of Leone became more and more gloomy.

On a certain day, the duke received a letter from the Emperor Charles V., in which there was question of a marriage between Emmanuel Philibert and the daughter of his brother, King Ferdinand. Leone was present at the reading of this letter; he could not dissemble the effect it produced on him, and to the great astonishment of Duke Charles III. and of Scianca-Ferro, who sought in vain for the motives of such grief, he went out, sobbing wildly.

As soon as Duke Charles returned to his apartments, Emmanuel rushed after his page. The sentiment he experienced for Leone was strange, and in no way resembled that with which Scianca-Ferro inspired him. To save the life of Scianca-Ferro, he would have given his life; to spare the blood of his foster-brother, he would have given his own; but his life and his blood he would have given to arrest a tear trembling on the long dark eyelashes of Leone.

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Therefore, having seen him weep, he wished to know the cause of this grief. For more than a year he had perceived the growing sorrow of the young page, and he had often asked the cause of such sadness; but Leone had immediately made an effort of self-control, had shaken his head, as if to chase away some gloomy thought, and replied with a smile: —

"I am too happy, Monseigneur Emmanuel, and I am always afraid such happiness may not last!"

And Emmanuel in turn shook his head; but as he perceived that too much importunity only seemed to render Leone more unhappy, he contented himself with taking his hands in his own and gazing on him fixedly, as if to question him in every sense.

But Leone would slowly turn away his eyes, and gently withdraw his hands from Emmanuel.

And Emmanuel would then sadly seek Scianca-Ferro, who did not even think of asking what was the matter, who never took it into *his* head to grasp hands and question with a look, so different was the friendship uniting Emmanuel to Scianca-Ferro from that uniting Emmanuel to Leone.

But on that day Emmanuel vainly searched for the page for more than an hour in the castle and park; he did not find him. He questioned everybody; none had seen Leone. At last he addressed one of the grooms; according to the latter, Leone had entered the church, and must be there still.

Emmanuel ran to the church, took in at a glance the whole interior of the gloomy edifice, and saw Leone on his knees in the most retired corner of the darkest chapel.

He approached him near enough almost to touch him without the page, lost in meditation, even suspecting his presence. Then he made a step forward and touched his shoulder, pronouncing his name.

Leone started, and regarded Emmanuel with almost a scared expression.

"Pray what are you doing in this church at this hour, Leone?" asked Emmanuel, anxiously.

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"I am asking God," said Leone, sadly, "to grant me the strength to execute the plan which I am contemplating."

"And what is this plan, child?" asked Emmanuel. "May I not know it?"

"On the contrary, monseigneur," replied Leone, "you shall be the first to know it."

"You swear it to me, Leone?"

"Alas, yes, monseigneur!" replied the young man, with a sad smile.

Emmanuel took his hand and tried to draw him out of the church; but Leone gently freed his hand, as he was accustomed doing since for some time, and, kneeling again, begged the young duke to leave him alone.

"By and by," he said; "just at present I want to be alone with God."

There was something so solemn and melancholy in the tones of the young man that Emmanuel did not venture to resist.

He left the church, but waited for Leone at the door.

Leone started on perceiving him, and yet he did not seem astonished to find him there.

"And shall I know this secret some day or other?" asked Emmanuel.

"To-morrow I hope to have strength enough to tell it to you, monseigneur," replied Leone.

"Where?"

"In this church."

"At what hour?"

"Come at the same hour as to-day."

"And in the mean time, Leone?" asked Emmanuel, entreatingly.

"In the mean time I hope that monseigneur will not force me to quit my chamber; I need solitude and reflection."

Emmanuel regarded the page with an inexpressible pang at the heart, and conducted him to the door of his chamber. Arrived there, Leone wished to take the hand of the prince and kiss it. Emmanuel, in turn, dropped his hand,

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threw his two arms around his comrade, and attempted to embrace him; but Leone gently repulsed him, disengaged himself, and with an accent of unutterable sweetness and melancholy said,—

"To-morrow, monseigneur."

And he entered his room.

Emmanuel remained a moment motionless at the door. He heard Leone shooting the bolt.

The chill of the iron as he heard seemed to penetrate to the depths of his soul.

"My God!" he murmured quite low; "what is coming over me, and what is this I am feeling?"

"What the devil are you doing there?" said a rough voice behind him, while a vigorous hand was pressed on his shoulder.

Emmanuel heaved a sigh, took the arm of Scianca-Ferro, and drew him into the garden.

They sat down side by side on a bench.

Emmanuel related to Scianca-Ferro all that had just passed between him and Leone.

Scianca-Ferro reflected a moment, cast up his eyes, and bit his fist.

Then suddenly, "I bet I know what's the matter," he said.

"What is it then?"

"Leone is in love!"

It seemed to Emmanuel as if he had received a thrust through the heart.

"Impossible!" he stammered.

"And why impossible?" retorted Scianca-Ferro. "I am the same myself."

"You! And with whom?" asked Emmanuel.

"Eh, *parbleu!* with Gervaise, the daughter of the porter of the castle. She was terribly afraid during the siege, poor child, particularly when night came, and so to reassure her, I kept her with me."

Emmanuel made a motion with his shoulders to signify

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that he was very sure that Leone did not love the daughter of a porter.

Scianca-Ferro misinterpreted the gesture of Emmanuel, which he took for a mark of disdain.

"Ah, Master Cardinalin!" he said (in spite of the collar of the Golden Fleece, at certain moments Scianca-Ferro still gave this title to Emmanuel), "you needn't be quite so dainty. As for me, I declare to you, I prefer Gervaise to all the beautiful ladies of the court. And should there be a tournament, I am ready to wear her colours and defend her beauty against all comers!"

"I would pity those who would not be of your opinion, my dear Scianca-Ferro," replied Emmanuel.

"And you are right; because I would strike as hard for the daughter of a porter as for the daughter of a king."

Emmanuel rose, pressed Scianca-Ferro's hand, and returned to his apartments.

Decidedly, as he had said, Scianca-Ferro struck too hard to comprehend what was passing in the heart of Emmanuel, and to divine what was passing in the soul of Leone.

As to Emmanuel, although endowed with a greater delicacy of feeling and a more exquisite susceptibility of spirit, he sought vainly in the solitude of his chamber and in the silence of the night, not only for what was passing in the soul of Leone, but for what was agitating his own heart.

He therefore awaited the morrow impatiently. The morning slipped by slowly, without Emmanuel seeing Leone. When the hour came, he walked trembling to the church, as if something of the highest importance was about to be decided in his life.

The treaty of Crespy, signed a year before, and which was to finally restore or take from him his states, had appeared to him of less gravity than the secret he was about to learn from Leone.

He found the young man on the same spot as on the evening before. Without doubt he had been a long time

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praying. Still, his face gave evidence of a resignation full of sadness.

Emmanuel went quickly up to him. Leone received him with a gentle, but melancholy smile.

"Well?" asked Emmanuel.

"Well, monseigneur," replied Leone, "I have a favour to beg of you."

"What is it, Leone?"

"You see my weakness and unfitness for all bodily exercises. In your almost royal future you require strong men like Scianca-Ferro, and not weak and timid children like me, monseigneur." Leone made an effort, and two big tears coursed down his cheeks. "Monseigneur, I beg of you the singular favour of allowing me to leave you."

Emmanuel took a step backward. His life, begun between Scianca-Ferro and Leone, had never presented itself to him in the future as deprived of either of these two friends.

"Leave me?" he said to Leone in amazement.

Leone did not reply, and bent his head.

"Leave me?" repeated Emmanuel, with an accent of the most poignant sorrow. "You leave me! me! impossible!"

"It is necessary," said Leone, in a voice almost unintelligible.

Emmanuel, like one who feels himself becoming mad, bore his hand to his forehead, looked at the altar, and let his two arms fall inert along his body.

For a few seconds, he questioned himself, then he questioned God, and, as he received no response either from earth or heaven, he fell back discouraged.

"Leave me!" he resumed for the third time, as if he could not grow accustomed to the word,—"me, who found you dying, Leone, me who received you as a messenger from Providence, me who have always treated you as a brother! Oh!"

"It is for that very reason, monseigneur: it is because I owe you too much, and because in remaining near you I

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can make no return for what I owe you; it is because I wish to spend my whole life in prayer for my benefactor."

"Pray for me!" said Emmanuel, more and more astonished. "And where?"

"In some holy monastery, which seems a place much better suited for a poor orphan like me than that which I would occupy in a brilliant court such as yours is sure to be."

"My mother, my poor mother!" murmured Emmanuel, "what would you say, you who loved him so well, if you heard this?"

"In presence of that God who is listening to us," said Leone, placing his hand solemnly on the arm of the young prince,—"in presence of that God who is listening to us, she would say that I am right."

There was such an accent of truth, such conviction of heart, if not of conscience, in the reply of Leone, that Emmanuel was shaken by it.

"Leone," he said, "do what you wish, my child; you are free. I have tried to bind your heart; but I have never had the intention of binding your body. However, I ask you not to precipitate your resolution; take eight days, take—"

"Oh," said Leone, "if I do not set out on the moment when God gives me strength to leave you, I shall never be able to do so; and I tell you," continued the child, breaking into sobs, "I must depart."

"Depart! But why, why depart?"

To this question Leone replied by the same inflexible silence he had exhibited on two previous occasions,—the first, when at the village of Oleggio the duchess had questioned him on his parents and his birth; the second, when at Genoa Emmanuel wished to know why he refused the diamond of Charles V.

He was about to insist on an answer when he heard a step in the church.

It was one of his father's servants, who announced that Duke Charles desired to see him on the instant.

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Important news had just been received from France.

"You see, Leone," said Emmanuel to the child, "I must leave you now; I will see you again in the evening, and if you persist in your resolution, well, you shall be free, my child. You may leave me to-morrow, or even this evening, if you believe you ought to remain with me no longer."

Leone did not reply; he fell on his knees with a deep groan. It looked as if his heart were broken.

Emmanuel departed; but before leaving the church, he could not help turning his head two or three times to learn if the child felt as much pain in seeing him depart as he felt in departing.

Leone remained alone and prayed for another hour; then he grew calmer and returned to his chamber. In the absence of Emmanuel, his resolution, tottering in the presence of the young prince, became more firm, being strengthened by that angel with the heart of ice whom men call reason.

But once in his chamber, the idea that Emmanuel might appear at any moment and make a final attempt to move him, disturbed the child.

At every noise he heard on the staircase, he started; the footsteps resounding in the corridor seemed, when passing before his door, to be treading on his heart.

Two hours glided past; a step was heard. Oh, this time Leone had no longer any doubt; he had recognised the step.

The door opened, and Emmanuel appeared. He was sad, and yet in his look there was a blending of joy with this sadness. "Well, Leone," he asked, after closing the door, "have you reflected?"

"Monseigneur," replied Leone, "when you left me, my reflections were already made."

"So that you persist in abandoning me?"

Leone had not the strength to reply; he contented himself with making a sign of the head in the affirmative.

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"And this," continued Emmanuel, with a melancholy smile, — "and this, because I am going to be a great prince and to have a brilliant court?"

Leone inclined his head anew.

"Well," said Emmanuel, with a certain bitterness, "on this point you may be reassured. I am to-day more miserable than I have ever been!"

Leone raised his head, and Emmanuel could see the amazement in his beautiful eyes shine through his tears.

"The second son of the King of France, the Duc d'Orléans, is dead," said Emmanuel, "so that the treaty of Crespy is broken."

"And — and?" asked Leone, questioning Emmanuel with every muscle of his face.

"And," returned Emmanuel, "as the Emperor Charles V., my uncle, will not give the duchy of Milan to my cousin François I., my cousin François I. will not restore his states to my father."

"But," asked Leone with an indescribable feeling of anguish, "that marriage with the daughter of Ferdinand, that marriage proposed by the emperor himself, — that marriage will take place?"

"Ah! my poor Leone, the man whom the Emperor Charles V. wished as the husband of his niece was Count of Bresse, Duke of Savoy, and Prince of Piedmont; it was, in fine, a crowned husband, not poor Emmanuel Philibert, who out of all his states retains only the city of Nice, the valley of Aosta, and a few patches scattered here and there through Savoy and Piedmont."

"Oh!" cried Leone, with a feeling of joy he could not stifle. But, almost immediately recovering that powerful control over himself that threatened to escape him, "No matter, monseigneur; this must not change anything of what was arranged," he said.

"And so," asked Emmanuel, sadder and gloomier at this resolution of the child than he had been at the news of the loss of his states, "you quit me for ever, Leone?"

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"It is as necessary to-day as it was yesterday, Emmanuel."

"Yesterday, Leone, I was rich, I was powerful, I had a ducal crown on my head; to-day, I am poor, despoiled, and have nothing left but my sword. In leaving me yesterday you would be only cruel; leaving me to-day, you will be ungrateful. Adieu, Leone."

"Ungrateful!" exclaimed Leone; "O God! you hear him; he says I am ungrateful."

Then, as with bent brows and gloomy eye, the young prince was preparing to leave the chamber, —

"Oh, Emmanuel!" cried Leone, "do not quit me thus; it would kill me!"

Emmanuel turned round; the arms of the child were stretched out to him. Leone was pale, tottering, almost fainting.

He rushed forward and supported him in his arms, and, carried away by the first impulse, — an impulse he could not account for, — he pressed his lips on the lips of his companion.

Leone uttered a cry as agonising as if a red-hot iron had touched them, fell backward, and fainted. The button of his doublet was pressing on his throat; Emmanuel opened it. Then, as the child was stifling in his arms, he tore it off, and at the same time to give him air opened all the buttons of his vest; but this time it was Emmanuel who uttered a cry, not of sorrow, but of surprise, astonishment, and joy.

Leone was a woman.

After returning to consciousness, Leone existed no longer; but Leona was the mistress of Emmanuel Philibert.

From that time there was no longer question for the poor child of separating from her lover, to whom now everything was clear without a word of explanation, — sadness, solitude, and desire of flight. Perceiving that she loved Emmanuel Philibert, Leona had wished to be separated from him; but the moment the young man had taken possession of her love, Leona gave him her life.

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In the eyes of every one else, the page continued to be a young man, and was called Leone. For Emmanuel Philibert alone, Leone was a beautiful young girl, and was called Leona.

As a prince, Emmanuel Philibert lost Bresse, Piedmont, and Savoy, with the exception of the valley of Aosta, and the cities of Nice and Verceil; but as a man he lost nothing, since God gave him Scianca-Ferro and Leona; that is to say, the two most magnificent presents in the gift of heaven that God can bestow on one of his elect, — devotion and love.

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X.

THE THREE MESSAGES.

Let us now tell in a few lines all that passed during the period of time elapsing between this period and the one we have reached at present.

Emmanuel Philibert had said to Leone that he had nothing left but his sword.

The league of the Protestants of Germany, raised by John Frederick, Elector of Saxony, who was disturbed by the successive encroachments of the Empire, had, on breaking out, given the young prince an opportunity of offering that sword to Charles V.

This time it was accepted.

The pretext was that, as long as the emperor lived, his brother Ferdinand could not be King of the Romans.

The league was formed in the little town of Smalkalde, situated in the county of Henecery, and belonging to the Landgrave of Hesse; hence the name of *League of Smalkalde*, under which it is known.

Henry VIII. had a scruple, and kept apart from it; François I., on the contrary, entered into it with all his heart.

The thing was of old date; it dated from the 22nd of December, 1530, the day of the first meeting.

Soliman was also in the league. In fact, he lent his aid to it by sending troops to besiege Messina in 1532; but Charles V. had marched against him with an army of ninety thousand foot-soldiers and thirty thousand cavalry, and forced him to raise the siege.

Then, the plague assisting him, he had destroyed the army of François I. in Italy, so that, on one side, had intervened the treaty of Cambrai, the 5th of August, 1529,

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and on the other the treaty of Nuremberg, the 23d July, 1532, which had given a few moments of repose to Europe.

We know already how long treaties made with François I. lasted. The treaty of Nuremberg was broken, and the league of Smalkalde, which had time to reunite all its forces, broke out.

The emperor marched in person against the Smalkaldists. What was passing in Germany always seemed to affect more peculiarly what was passing elsewhere.

It was because Charles V. understood that since the decadence of the Papacy, the greatest power in this world was the Empire.

It was in these circumstances that Emmanuel Philibert set out for Worms on the 27th of May, 1545, where the emperor was staying. The young prince was, as usual, accompanied by Scianca-Ferro and Leone.

He was attended by forty gentlemen.

It was all the army his father could raise in his states and send to the emperor, — he who still bore the titles of Duke of Savoy, Chablais, and Aosta; Prince of Piedmont, Achaia, and the Morea; Count of Geneva, Nice, Asti, Bresse, and Romont; Baron of Vaud, Gex, and Faucigny; Lord of Verceil, Beaufort, Bugey, and Freibourg; Prince and Perpetual Vicar of the Holy Empire; Marquis of Italy and King of Cyprus.

Charles V. received his nephew most affectionately. He permitted him to bear the title of Majesty in his presence, on account of that kingdom of Cyprus to which his father laid claim.

Emmanuel Philibert repaid this kindly reception by performing prodigies of valour at the battles of Ingolstadt and Mühlberg.

The last ended the struggle. Ten of the forty gentlemen of Emmanuel Philibert were absent from the roll-call in the evening; they were dead or wounded.

As to Scianca-Ferro, recognising the elector John Fredrick in the midst of the battle by his powerful Friesland

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horse, his gigantic figure, and the terrible blows which he struck, he had kept particularly close to him.

Certainly the young man would have won on that day the name of Scianca-Ferro, if it had not been given him already.

With a blow of his terrible battle-axe, he broke the right arm of the prince, then with the blade of the same weapon he cut his helmet and face at the same time; so that when the prisoner raised the mutilated visor of this same helmet in presence of the emperor, he had to name himself. He was no longer recognisable; his face was one frightful wound.

François I. had died a month before. When dying, he said to his son that all the misfortunes of France had come from his alliance with the Protestants and the Turks, and, recognising that Charles V. had the Almighty God on his side, he recommended the future King of France to keep on good terms with him.

There was then an interval of peace, during which Emmanuel Philibert went to see his father at Verceil. The interview was tender and full of deep affection; doubtless the Duke of Savoy had a presentiment that he was embracing his son for the last time.

The recommendation of François I. to Henri II. did not leave a deep impression in the heart of the latter, — a king without military genius, but with warlike instincts, — and the war was renewed on account of the assassination of the Duke of Placentia, that Paul Louis Farnese of whom we have already spoken.

He was assassinated in Placentia in 1548, by Pallavicini, Landi, Anguisuola, and Gonfalonieri, who immediately after the assassination placed the city in the hands of Ferdinand of Gonzague, the Milanese governor of Charles V.

On the other hand, Octavio Farnese, second son of Paul III., had taken possession of Parma, and, in order not to be forced to surrender it, had invoked the protection of Henri II.

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Now during the life of Paul Louis even, Charles V. had never ceased to claim Parma and Placentia as forming parts of the duchy of Milan.

The reader will call to mind the differences he had on this subject with Paul III.

Nothing more was required to rekindle the war, which flamed up at the same time in Italy and the Low Countries.

It was in Flanders, as always, that Charles V. made his greatest efforts. It was then quite naturally that our eyes, on the look-out for Emmanuel Philibert, were turned towards the north at the beginning of this book.

We have told how, after the siege of Metz and the capture of Thérouanne and Hesdin, the emperor, charging his nephew to rebuild the latter city, had named him commander-in-chief of his armies in Flanders and Governor of the Low Countries.

Then, as if to counterbalance this great honour, an ineffable sorrow struck the heart of Emmanuel Philibert. On the 17th of September, 1553, his father, the Duke of Savoy, died.

It is with this rank of commander-in-chief, and this sorrow which, if not denoted by his garb, as in the case of Hamlet, was not the less imprinted on his features, that we have seen him issuing from the imperial camp; and it is after enforcing his authority as Romulus enforced his that we see him return to it.

A messenger from Charles V. was waiting for him at the entrance to his tent; the emperor desired to speak to him that very moment.

Emmanuel at once leaped from the saddle, threw the bridle to one of his men, nodded to his squire and page as a sign that he would meet them after his return, unbuckled his sword, and placed it under his arm, as he was accustomed to do when he walked, wishing at need to always have the hilt within reach of his hand, and then took his way to the tent of the modern Cæsar.

The sentry presented arms, and he entered, preceded by

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the messenger, who was going to announce his arrival to the emperor.

The field tent of the emperor was divided into four compartments, without reckoning a kind of ante-chamber, or rather portico supported by four pillars.

These four compartments of the imperial tent served as a dining-room, parlour, bed-chamber, and office. Each of them had been furnished by the gift of a city, and adorned with the trophy of a victory.

The only trophy of the emperor's bed-chamber was the sword of François I. hanging at the head of his bed. The trophy was simple enough, the reader may well think; but it had more value in the eyes of Charles V., who carried it with him even into the monastery of Saint-Just, than all the trophies of the other three rooms united.

He who writes these lines has often, with a sad and melancholy look towards the past, held and drawn this sword, once held by François I., who surrendered it; by Charles V., who received it; and by Napoleon, who recovered it.

Strange nothingness of the things of this world!

Having become almost the sole dowry of a beautiful but fallen princess, it is to-day the property of a servant of Catherine II.

O François I.! O Charles V.! O Napoleon!

In the ante-chamber, although he barely crossed it, Emmanuel Philibert — with that glance of the born ruler of men that takes in everything in a second — remarked a man whose hands were tied behind his back, and who was guarded by four soldiers.

The man, thus bound, was clad like a peasant. As his head was uncovered, Emmanuel Philibert saw reason to conclude that neither his hair nor complexion were in harmony with his garb.

He thought it was a French spy they had just arrested, and that the emperor had summoned him in connection with this spy.

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Charles V. was in his cabinet; the duke was introduced as soon as he was announced.

Charles V., born along with the sixteenth century, was at this time a man of fifty-five years, not tall, but vigorous; his keen eyes sparkled under the eyebrows, but only when they were not dulled by pain. His hair was grizzled, but his beard, more thick than long, was of an ardent red.

He was lying on a sort of Turkish divan covered with Eastern stuffs that had been captured in the tent of Soliman before Vienna.

Within reach of his hand gleamed a trophy of kandjars and Arabian scimitars. He was muffled up in a long dressing-gown of black velvet. His visage was gloomy; and he appeared to be waiting impatiently for Emmanuel Philibert. However, when the duke was announced, this expression of impatience disappeared on the instant, even as a cloud which darkens the brightness of the day disappears at the touch of the north wind.

During a reign of forty years, the emperor had had time to learn to compose his countenance, and it must be said that none were more skilful in this art.

Still, at the first glance he cast on the emperor, Emmanuel understood that he was about to converse with him on grave matters.

Charles V., as soon as he perceived his nephew, turned his head in his direction, and, making an effort to change his position, gave him a friendly greeting with head and hand.

Emmanuel Philibert bowed respectfully.

The emperor opened the conversation in Italian. This sovereign, who regretted all his life not to know Greek and Latin, spoke equally well five living languages, — Italian, Spanish, French, English, and Flemish. "I learned Italian," he said, "to speak to the Pope; Spanish to speak to my mother Juana; English to speak to my aunt Catherine; Flemish to speak to my fellow-citizens and friends; in fine, French to speak to myself."

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Whatever hurry he might be in to discuss affairs with those he summoned near him, the emperor always began by saying a few words in their own language. "Well," he asked in Italian, "what news from the camp?"

"Sire," replied Emmanuel, employing the same language that Charles V. used, and which, for that matter, was his mother tongue, "news which your Majesty would soon learn, even if I did not bring it myself. This news is that, in order to have my title and authority respected, I have been forced to make a terrible example."

"A terrible example!" vaguely answered the emperor, who had already become absorbed in his own thoughts; "and what was it?"

Emmanuel Philibert began the recital of what took place between him and Count Waldeck; but important as was the narrative, it was evident the emperor was only listening with his ears: his mind was elsewhere.

"Well?" said Charles V., for the third time, when Emmanuel Philibert had finished.

Plunged, as he was, in his own thoughts, he had in all probability not heard a single word of the report which his general had made him.

In fact, during all the time the narrative lasted, the emperor, doubtless to hide his preoccupation, was looking at the fingers of his right hand, twisted and deformed by the gout.

That was the true enemy of Charles V., — a far deadlier enemy than Soliman or François I. or Henri II.!

The gout and Luther were the two enemies that troubled him incessantly; so he placed them both in the same rank.

"Ah! except for Luther and the gout," he would sometimes say, taking a fistful of his red beard as he descended from his horse, exhausted by some long march or some terrible battle, — "except for Luther and the gout, how I should sleep to-night!"

There was a moment's silence between the narrative of

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Emmanuel Philibert and the resumption of the conversation by the emperor.

At last, the latter, turning to his nephew, —

"I, too, have news to give you, and bad news!"

"From where, august emperor?"

"From Rome."

"Is the Pope elected?"

"Yes."

"And his name?"

"Peter Caraffa. The one he replaces, Emmanuel, was just my own age, born the same year, — Marcellus II. Poor Marcellus! Does not his death tell me to prepare to die?"

"Sire," said Emmanuel, "I do not think you ought to allow your mind to dwell on this event, or to judge the death of Marcellus from the standpoint of an ordinary death. Marcello Cervino, the cardinal, was healthy, robust, and might perhaps have lived a hundred years. Cardinal Marcello Cervino, become Pope Marcellus II., died in twenty days!"

"Yes, I know," replied Charles V., pensively; "he was also in too great a hurry to be pope. He had himself crowned with the tiara on Good Friday; that is to say, on the day on which our Lord was crowned with thorns. It brought him misfortune. So I am less preoccupied by his death than by the election of Paul IV."

"And yet, if I am not mistaken," replied Emmanuel, "Paul IV. is a Neapolitan; that is to say, a subject of your Majesty."

"Yes, undoubtedly. But I have always had bad reports of this cardinal, and while he was at the court of Spain I have had personal reasons to complain of him. Ah!" continued Charles V., with an expression of utter weariness, "I shall have to begin again with him the struggle I have sustained for twenty years with his predecessors, and I am at the end of my strength."

"Oh, sire!"

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Charles V. fell into a kind of reverie, from which he emerged almost immediately.

"For that matter," he added, as if speaking to himself, and with a sigh, "perhaps he will deceive me as the other popes have deceived me. They are always the very reverse of what they were as cardinals. I thought the Médicis Clement VII. a man of peaceful spirit, firm and constant; good! No sooner is he pope than I find I have been mistaken on all points; he is a restless, turbulent, variable spirit. On the other hand, I imagined Julius III. would neglect business for pleasure, and would be engrossed in diversions and amusements. *Peccato!* there never has been a more industrious and diligent pope, or one caring less for the joys of this world. What work he cut out for us, he and Cardinal Pole, in connection with the marriage of Philip and his cousin Mary Tudor! If we had not arrested that madman Pole at Augsburg, who knows if to-day the marriage would have been consummated? Ah, poor Marcellus!" said the emperor, heaving a second sigh, still more expressive than the first, "it was not because you were crowned on Good Friday that you survived your enthroning only twenty days; it was because you were my friend!"

"Let us wait, august emperor," said Emmanuel Philibert: "your Majesty acknowledges that you have been deceived with regard to Clement VII. and Julius III.; perhaps you may also be deceived with regard to Paul IV."

"God grant it! but I doubt."

A noise was heard at the door.

"What is the matter?" demanded Charles V., impatiently. "I gave directions that I was to be disturbed by nobody. See, Emmanuel, what is wanted."

The duke raised the tapestry in front of the door, exchanged a question and answer with the persons in the neighbouring compartment, and, turning towards the emperor, —

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"Sire," said he, "it is a courier from Spain, from Tordesillas."

"Let him enter; news of my good mother, no doubt."

The messenger appeared.

"Yes. Have you not news of my mother?" said Charles V., addressing the messenger in Spanish.

The messenger, without answering, tendered a letter to Emmanuel Philibert, who took it from his hand.

"Give it to me, Emmanuel; give it to me!" said the emperor. "And she is well, is she not?"

The messenger continued to keep silence. Emmanuel, on his side, hesitated to give the letter to Charles V.: it had a black seal; Charles V. saw the seal, and shuddered.

"Ah!" he said, "you see the election of Paul IV. brings me misfortune already. Give it to me," he continued, holding out his hand to Emmanuel.

Emmanuel obeyed; to have delayed longer would have been puerile.

"August sovereign," said he, on handing over the letter, "remember, you are a man!"

"Yes," replied Charles V.; "that is what they used to say to the Roman generals who were honoured with triumphs."

And, trembling, he opened the letter.

It contained only a few lines; yet to read it he had to return to it two or three times.

The tears hindered him from seeing; his eyes, worn and parched by ambition, were themselves astonished at this miracle; they had again found tears.

When he had finished, he handed the letter to Emmanuel Philibert, who took it from him, and fell back on the divan.

"Dead!" he said, — "dead on the 13th of April, 1555, the very day Peter Caraffa was named pope! Ah! my son, did I not tell you this man would bring me misfortune?"

Emmanuel had cast his eyes over the letter. It was signed by the royal notary of Tordesillas; it, in fact,

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announced the death of Juana of Castile, mother of Charles V., better known in history by the name of Juana the Mad.

He remained a moment motionless in presence of this great sorrow, which he did not know how to deal with, for Charles V. adored his mother.

"Augustus," he murmured at last, "remember all you had the goodness to say to me when I also had the misfortune, two years ago, to lose my father."

"Yes, yes, such things are said," returned the emperor; "good reasons are found for the consolation of others, and then, when our turn comes, we are powerless to console ourselves!"

"And so I do not console you, Augustus," said Emmanuel; "on the contrary, I say, Weep, weep, for you are only a man!"

"What a painful life was hers, Emmanuel!" said Charles V. "In 1496 she marries my father, Philip the Fair; she adored him! In 1506 he dies, poisoned from drinking a glass of water while playing tennis; she becomes mad with grief. For ten years she awaited the resurrection of her husband, which a Carthusian monk had promised her in order to console her; and for ten years she never left Tordesillas, except when, in 1516, she came to me at Villa-Viciosa, and with her own hands placed the crown of Spain on my head. Mad with the love which she had had for her husband, she only recovered her reason when she had to occupy herself with her son. Poor mother! All my reign will at least bear witness to the respect I had for her. Nothing of importance has been done in Spain for the last forty years without her advice on the matter being taken, — not that she was always in a condition to give it; but it was my duty as a son to act thus, and I fulfilled it. Do you know that, though a Spaniard, and a good Spaniard at that, she came to Flanders for her *accouchement*, in order that I might be one day emperor in place of my grandfather Maximil-

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ian? Do you know that, although the best of mothers, she renounced the privilege of suckling me, lest, being nourished by her milk, I might be accused of being too Spanish? And, in fact, the two principal titles to which I owe the imperial crown are being a foster-child of Anne Sterel, and being a citizen of Ghent. Well, from before my birth, my mother had foreseen all this. And what can I do for her after her death, — order for her a splendid funeral? She will have it. But, in truth, to be Emperor of Germany, King of Spain, Naples, Sicily, and the two Indias, to have an empire on which, according to my flatterers, the sun never sets, and to be able to do nothing for one's mother except to give her a splendid funeral! Ah, Emmanuel, the power of the most powerful man is very limited indeed!"

At this moment the hangings at the door of the tent were raised anew; and, through the opening, an officer was seen, all covered with dust, and seeming also to be the bearer of urgent news.

The expression on the emperor's countenance was so sad that the usher, who had ventured to disregard the countersign in view of the importance of the news brought by the third messenger, and to enter the cabinet of Charles V., stopped short.

"Enter!" said Charles, in Flemish; "what is the matter?"

"Sire," said the messenger, "King Henri II. has opened a campaign at the head of three armies: the first, commanded by himself, having under his orders Connétable Montmorency; the second, commanded by Maréchal de Saint-André, and the third commanded by the Duc de Nevers."

"And what next?" asked the emperor.

"Next, sire, the King of France has laid siege to Marienbourg, and taken it; he is now marching on Bouvines."

"And on what day did he lay siege to Marienbourg?" said Charles.

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"On the 13th of April last, sire."

Charles V. turned round to Emmanuel Philibert.

"Well," he asked him in French, "what do you say of the date, Emmanuel?"

"A fatal date, indeed!" replied the latter.

"That is sufficient," said Charles V. to the messenger; "leave us."

Then, to the usher, —

"Take as much care of that captain as if he brought us good news," said the emperor. "Go!"

This time Emmanuel Philibert did not wait for the emperor to question him. Before even the hangings fell again, he began: —

"Luckily," said he, "if we can do nothing, august emperor, against the election of Paul IV.; if we can do nothing against the death of your beloved mother, — we can do something against the taking of Marienbourg."

"And what can we do?"

"Take it back again!"

"Yes, you may, not I, Emmanuel."

"Why not you?" said the Prince of Piedmont.

Charles V. raised himself from the divan, and, drawing himself up with difficulty, attempted to walk; but he could only take a few steps, limping.

He shook his head, and, turning to his nephew, —

"See, look at my legs," he said: "they no longer sustain me now, either on foot or horseback; look at my hands; they can no longer hold a sword. There is a saying, Emmanuel, that he who can no longer hold a sword can no longer hold a sceptre."

"What are you saying, sire?" exclaimed Emmanuel, astounded.

"A thing of which I have often thought, and of which I shall think again. Emmanuel, everything warns me that it is time to leave my place to another: the surprise of Innspruck, from which I had to fly half-naked; the retreat of Metz, where I left the third of my army and the

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half of my reputation; yet, more than all that, look you, this disease which human strength cannot long resist; this disease which medicine cannot cure; this frightful, inexorable, cruel disease, which invades the body from the crown of the head to the sole of the feet, which contracts the nerves with intolerable pains, which penetrates the bones, freezes the marrow, and converts into solid chalk the beneficent oil spread through our joints to facilitate their movements; this disease, which mutilates a man limb by limb more cruelly, more surely, than does steel or fire or all the implements of war, and which breaks the strength and serenity of the soul under the tortures of matter, — this disease is incessantly crying out to me: 'You have had enough of power, enough of sovereignty! Return into the nothingness of life before returning into the nothingness of the tomb! Charles, by the grace of God, Emperor of the Romans, Charles, King of Germany, Castile, Leon, Grenada, Aragon, Naples, Sicily, Majorca, Sardinia, and the islands and Indias of both oceans, make way for another, for another!'"

Emmanuel wished to speak.

The emperor arrested him by a gesture.

"And then, and then," continued Charles V., "there is another thing I had forgotten to tell you! As if the dissolution of this poor body was too slow for the wishes of my enemies, as if defeats and heresies and the gout were not sufficient, the poniard has come to play a part in the drama!"

"How, the poniard?" exclaimed Emmanuel.

The face of Charles V. was overcast.

"An attempt was made to assassinate me to-day," he said.

"An attempt to assassinate your Majesty?" cried Emmanuel, terrified.

"Why not?" replied the emperor, with a smile. "Have you not just now reminded me that I was a man?"

"Oh!" cried Emmanuel, scarcely recovering from the

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emotion this intelligence had caused him; "and who is the wretch?"

"Ah! yes, indeed!" said the emperor. "Who is the wretch? I hold the poniard, but not the hand!"

"In fact," said Emmanuel, "I just now saw a man bound in the antechamber—"

"That is the wretch, as you call him, Emmanuel. But who has employed him? The Turk? I do not believe so; Soliman is a loyal enemy. Henri II.? I do not even suspect him. Paul IV.? He has not been long enough elected; and then the popes,—they generally prefer poison to the dagger: *Ecclesia abhorret a sanguine.* Octavio Farnese? He is too paltry a person to venture on attacking me,—the imperial bird that Maurice did not dare to take, not being acquainted, he said, with a cage large enough to hold him. The Lutherans of Augsburg or the Calvinists of Geneva? I am altogether puzzled; and yet I should like to know— Listen, Emmanuel, this man has refused to answer my questions; take him into your tent and question him in your turn. Do with him whatever you please; I give him to you. But understand well,—he must be made to speak. The nearer the enemy is to me, and the more powerful he is, the greater need I have to know him."

Then, after a moment's pause, he fixed his gaze on Emmanuel Philibert, who held his eyes pensively bent towards the ground.

"By the way," he said, "your cousin Philip has arrived at Brussels."

The transition was so abrupt that Emmanuel started. He raised his head, and his glance met that of the emperor. This time he shuddered.

"Well?" he asked.

"Well," returned Charles, "I shall be happy to see my son again. Would you not say that he guesses the hour is come and the moment favourable for him to succeed me? But before I see him again, Emmanuel, I recommend my assassin to you."

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"In an hour," replied Emmanuel, "your Majesty shall know all you desire to know."

And, bowing to the emperor, who offered him his mutilated hand, Emmanuel Philibert withdrew, convinced that the thing of which Charles V. had spoken to him as if it were a mere casual remark introduced into the conversation, was, of all the events of the day, the one to which he attached the most importance.

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XI.

ODOARDO MARAVIGLIA.

On retiring, Emmanuel Philibert cast a fresh look on the prisoner, and this look confirmed him in his first idea; that is to say, that he was going to deal with a gentleman. He made a sign to the leader of the four soldiers to approach him.

"My friend," he said, "in five minutes you will, by order of the emperor, conduct this man into my tent."

Emmanuel might have dispensed with naming Charles V.: it was known that the latter had delegated to him all his powers; and, in general, the soldiers, who worshipped him, would have obeyed him as they would have obeyed the emperor himself.

"Your order shall be executed, your Highness," replied the sergeant.

The duke resumed the road to his lodgings.

The tent of Emmanuel was not, like that of the emperor, a splendid pavilion, divided into four compartments; it was the tent of a soldier cut in two by a piece of mere canvas.

Scianca-Ferro was seated at the door.

"Remain where you are," said Emmanuel to him; "but take some weapon or other."

"Why?" asked Scianca-Ferro.

"A man is about to be brought hither who has attempted to assassinate the emperor. I intend to question him without any witnesses. Look well at him when he enters; and, if he attempts to violate the pledge, which he will doubtless give, by trying to escape, stop him, — but living, you understand? It is important that he live!"

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"Then," said Scianca-Ferro, "I do not need weapons; my arms are sufficient."

"Do as you like; you are warned."

"Do not be disturbed about the matter," said Scianca-Ferro.

The prince entered his tent, and found Leone, or rather Leona, waiting for him. As he returned alone, and as the curtain of his tent fell behind him, Leona came to meet him with open arms.

"You are here at last, my love! My God! what a terrible scene was that at which we have been present! Alas! you were quite right in telling me that my emotion and paleness would lead one to take me for a woman."

"What would you have, Leona? These are ordinary scenes in the life of a soldier, and you ought to be accustomed to them by this time." Then, smiling, "Look at Scianca-Ferro, and take him for your model," he added.

"How can you utter such words as those with a smile, Emmanuel? Scianca-Ferro is a man: he loves you as much as a man can love a man, as I well know; but I love you, Emmanuel, to a degree that cannot be expressed, as something without which one no longer lives! I love you as the flower loves the dew, as the bird loves the forest, as the dawn loves the sun. With you I live, exist, and love; without you I am no more!"

"My own darling," said Emmanuel, "yes, I know you are at the same time grace, devotion, and love; I know that you move beside me, but that it is really in me that you live, and so for you I have no mysteries or secrets."

"Why do you say this?"

"Because a man is about to be brought hither; because this man is a great criminal whom I wish to question; because he will perhaps make important revelations — who knows? — revelations that may compromise the highest personages. Pass to that side of the tent. Listen if you wish; whatever I hear will, I know, be heard by myself alone."

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Leona shrugged her shoulders. "Except you," she said, "what is the rest of the world to me?"

And the young girl, sending a caress to her lover with her hand, disappeared behind the curtain.

It was time; the five minutes were passed, and, with the usual military punctuality, the sergeant arrived, conducting his prisoner.

Emmanuel received him seated, and half lost in the shadow. From the midst of this shadow he cast a third look, deeper and more prolonged, on the prisoner.

He was a young man of from thirty to thirty-five. His stature was so lofty and his face so distinguished that his disguise, as we have said, had not prevented Emmanuel Philibert from recognising him as a gentleman.

"Leave the gentleman alone with me," said the prince to the sergeant.

The sergeant could only obey; he went out with his three men.

The prisoner fixed his keen and piercing eye on Emmanuel Philibert.

The latter rose, and went straight up to him. "Sir," said he, "those people did not know with whom they had to do, and so they have bound you. You are going to give me your word of honour not to attempt to escape, and I am going to untie your hands."

"I am a peasant, and not a gentleman," said the murderer; "I cannot, consequently, give you my word of honour as a gentleman."

"If you are a peasant, that word of honour does not bind you to anything. Give it to me, then, since it is the only pledge I require of you."

The prisoner did not answer.

"Then," said Emmanuel, "I will untie your hands without the word of honour. I do not fear to find myself alone with a man, even though that man had no honour to pledge!"

And the prince began untying the hands of the unknown.

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The latter took a step backward. "Wait," he said; "on the faith of a gentleman, I shall not attempt to escape!"

"Come, now," said Emmanuel, smiling, "what the mischief! dogs, horses, and men know each other;" and he finished loosening the cord. "There! you are free; now let us talk."

The prisoner gazed coldly on his bruised hands, and let them fall by his side. "Talk?" he repeated, with irony; "and of what?"

"Why," replied Emmanuel Philibert, "of the cause that led you to this crime."

"I have said nothing," replied the unknown, "and I have nothing to say."

"You have said nothing to the emperor, whom you wished to kill, that is conceivable; you said nothing to the soldiers who arrested you, that I can easily understand; but to me, a gentleman who treats you, not as a vulgar assassin, but as a gentleman, — to me you will tell everything."

"For what good?"

"For what good? I am about to tell you: because I do not regard you as a man paid by some coward who has placed your arm at the end of his own, not daring to strike himself. For what good? Because you must not be hanged as some thief or lurking assassin, but decapitated as a noble and a lord."

"They have threatened to torture me to make me speak," said the prisoner; "let them do it!"

"Torture would be a useless cruelty; you would undergo it, and you would not speak; you would be mutilated, and not vanquished; you would keep your secret and leave the shame to your tormentors. No, that is not what I want; I want you to speak to me, a gentleman and a prince, as you would speak to a priest. And if you judge it unsafe to speak to me, it is because you are one of those wretches with whom I did not wish to confound you; it is because you

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have acted under the influence of a base passion you dare not avow; it is because —"

The prisoner drew himself up to his full height, and, interrupting, said: —

"My name is Odoardo Maraviglia, monsieur! Revive your recollections, and stop insulting me."

At this name of Odoardo Maraviglia, Emmanuel thought he heard a stifled cry in the other compartment of the tent; what he was sure of was that the canvas that divided it trembled, as if something had set it in motion.

On his part, Emmanuel felt something vibrate strongly in his memory at the sound of that name. In fact, that name had served as a pretext for the war which had deprived him of his states.

"Odoardo Maraviglia!" he said. "Are you the son of Francesco Maraviglia, the French ambassador at Milan?"

"I am his son."

Emmanuel concentrated his thoughts on the distant recollections of his boyhood; he found that name among them, but it threw no light on the present situation.

"Your name," he said, "is surely the name of a gentleman; but it does not recall any memory connected with the crime of which you are accused."

Odoardo smiled disdainfully.

"Ask the most august emperor," said he, "if there is the same obscurity in his memory that there is in yours."

"Excuse me, sir," returned Emmanuel; "at the time when Comte Francesco de Maraviglia disappeared I was still a child; I was hardly eight years old. It is not astonishing, then, that I was ignorant of a disappearance which, as I think I can recall, remained a mystery for everybody."

"Well, monseigneur, I am about to throw some light on this mystery. You know what a wretched prince was the last Sforza, eternally wavering between François I. and Charles V., according as the genius of victory favoured the one or the other. My father, Francesco Maraviglia,

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was appointed envoy extraordinary to him by François I. This was in 1534. The emperor was occupied in Africa; the Duke of Saxony, the ally of François, had just made peace with the King of the Romans; Clement VII., another ally of France, had just excommunicated Henry VIII., King of England. Everything turned to the detriment of the emperor in Italy. Sforza turned, like everybody, to whom he still owed four hundred thousand ducats, and intrusted all his political fortunes to the envoy extraordinary of King François I. It was a great triumph. Francesco Maraviglia had the imprudence to boast of it. The words he spoke crossed the seas, and startled Charles V. in presence of the Turks. Alas! fortune is fickle. Two months after, Clement VII., who was the strength of the French in Italy, died; Tunis was taken by Charles V., and the emperor, with his victorious army, landed in Italy. An expiatory victim was necessary. Francesco Maraviglia was marked by fate to be that victim. In a quarrel between the servants of Comte Maraviglia and some of the rabble of Milan, two of the latter happened to be slain. The duke only wanted a pretext for keeping his promise to the august emperor. The man who for a year had been more powerful in Milan than the duke himself was arrested as a vulgar malefactor, and conducted to the citadel. My mother was present; she had with her my sister, a child four years old. I was in Paris, at the Louvre; I was one of the pages of François I. The count was torn from the arms of my mother; he was dragged away without the poor woman being told what he was charged with, or where he was being taken. Eight days passed, during which, despite all their efforts, the countess could discover nothing as to the fate of her husband. Maraviglia was known to be immensely rich; his wife was able to purchase his liberty at his weight in gold. One night a man knocked at the door of my mother's palace; it was opened for him; he asked to speak to the countess without witnesses. Everything was of importance under the circumstances. Through

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the agency of friends and Frenchmen my mother spread a report through the city that she would give five hundred ducats to whoever would tell her where my father was. Probably this man, who desired to speak to her alone, was bringing news of the count, and, fearing betrayal, wished, by excluding witnesses, to insure secrecy.

"She was not mistaken; this man was one of the jailers of the fortress of Milan, where my father was imprisoned. Not only did he come to tell where my father was, but he brought a letter from him. On recognising her husband's handwriting, she counted out the five hundred ducats.

"The letter of my father announced his arrest, and that he had been placed in solitary confinement, but did not express any keen anxiety as to the result. My mother, in her reply, told her husband to dispose of her; her life and fortune were his. Five days passed. In the middle of the night the same man knocked at the palace; it was opened, and he was immediately introduced to the countess. The situation of the prisoner had, in the mean time, been aggravated. He was placed in another dungeon, and his confinement was made more rigidly secret.

"'His life,' said the jailer, 'was in peril.'

"Did this man want to extract some large sum from the countess, or was he telling the truth? Either of these two hypotheses might be correct. But fear induced my mother to adopt the latter. Moreover, she questioned the jailer, and his replies, while giving evidence of cupidity, also bore the impress of frankness.

"She gave him the same sum as on the first occasion, and told him at all hazards to form some plan for the count's escape. As soon as such a plan was arranged, he would receive a sum of five thousand ducats; and, once the count was out of danger, twenty thousand more would be handed over to him.

"It was a fortune! The jailer left the countess, promising to think over what he had just heard. The countess, on her side, made inquiries into the situation; she had

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friends near the duke; she knew through them that the situation was even worse than it had been described by the jailer. It was intended to prosecute the count as a spy. She awaited impatiently the visit of the jailer; she did not even know his name; and, even though she knew it, would she not ruin the jailer and ruin herself, if she were rash enough to inquire after him?

"However, one thing reassured her somewhat: there was to be a prosecution. What accusation could they bring against my father? The death of these two Milanese? It was an affair between domestics and peasants, with which a gentleman, an ambassador, could have nothing to do. But some voices said, quite low, that there would be no prosecution; and these voices were the most sinister of all, for they let it be understood that the count would not the less surely be condemned for all that. At last, my mother was startled one night by the noise of the knocker on the door; she was beginning to recognise the manner in which her nocturnal visitor knocked; she awaited him on the threshold of her bedchamber. He addressed her with even more mystery than usual; he had found a means of escape, and was come to propose it to the countess. This was the plan he adopted.

"The dungeon of the prisoner was separated from the lodging of the jailer by a single gallery, opening into the dungeon by means of an iron door barred at the top. The jailer had the key of this second dungeon as well as of the first. He proposed to bore through the wall behind his bed, at a spot concealed from every eye. Through this opening he would enter the empty cell, and from there pass into the count's dungeon. The fetters of the count knocked off, he could pass from his dungeon into the neighbouring cell, and then into the jailer's room.

"There he would find a ladder of ropes, by the aid of which he would descend into the fosse, at the darkest and most solitary part of the wall; a carriage would wait for the count a hundred yards from the fosse, and would carry

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him out of the duke's states with all the speed of two horses. The plan was good; the countess accepted it, but, fearing some deception might be practised on her with regard to the count, and she might be told he was saved while still a captive, she required to be present at this flight. The jailer objected the difficulty of introducing her into the fortress; but by a single word the countess removed this difficulty. She had obtained permission for herself and her daughter to see her husband, — a permission she had not yet availed herself of, and could therefore still make use of it. On the day appointed for the count's flight, she would enter the fortress at nightfall; she would see the count; then, on leaving him, instead of quitting the fortress, she would enter the jailer's room. There she would await the moment for the prisoner's flight. The jailer, who would depart with the count, would receive from the latter the sum agreed on. The carriage awaiting them was to contain a hundred thousand francs.

"The jailer was sincere in his offers; he accepted. The flight was arranged for the day after the next day. Before leaving, the jailer received his five thousand ducats, and indicated the place where the carriage was to be stationed. The care of this carriage was confided by the countess to one of her servants, a man of tried fidelity.

"But, pardon, monseigneur," said Odoardo, interrupting himself. "I forget I am speaking to a stranger, and that all these details, full of emotion and life for me, are indifferent to my listener."

"You are mistaken, sir," said Emmanuel; "I desire, on the contrary, to make appeal to your memory, in order that I myself may be able to share in all your recollections. I am listening."

Odoardo continued: —

"The two days passed in all the anguish that precedes the execution of such a project. One thing, however, tranquillised the countess: it was that the jailer had such an overpowering interest in the success of the enterprise; a

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hundred years' fidelity would not give this man the reward to be obtained by a quarter of an hour's treason. Ten times the countess asked herself why she had not decided on making the attempt at the end of twenty-four hours instead of at the end of forty-eight. It seemed as if the last twenty-four hours would never end, or would lead to some catastrophe that would upset the plan, however well conceived and ingenious it might be. The time swept by, measured by the hand of eternity. The hours struck with their ordinary impassibility. At last that one arrived that was to tell her the moment had come to enter the prison. In presence of the countess, the carriage was laden with all the objects necessary for the flight of the count, in order that he might not be forced to stop on the route; two horses had been led beyond Pavia, so that he could make about thirty leagues without any delay. At eleven o'clock the horses would be harnessed to the carriage, which at midnight would be at the spot agreed upon.

"Once out of danger, the fugitive would take steps to warn the countess, and the latter would join her husband, wherever he might be. The hour struck. Face to face with the moment of execution, the countess now thought it had come very soon. She took her little daughter by the hand, and directed her course toward the prison. One fear agitated her during the journey: it was that as the permit was dated eight days back, she might be refused entrance to the prison.

"The countess was mistaken; she was introduced, without any difficulty, to the prisoner. The reports she heard were not exaggerated; and the manner in which a man of the count's rank was treated showed there could be no illusion on the fate that awaited him. The ambassador of France had a chain on his foot, as if he were a vile felon. The interview would have been very painful, if escape had not been imminent and certain. During this interview all that was not yet arranged was finally settled.

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"The count was resolved on everything; he knew he had no quarter to expect; the emperor had positively insisted on his death —"

Emmanuel Philibert made a movement.

"Are you sure of what you say, sir?" he asked severely. "Do you know this is a grave accusation you are making against so great a prince as the Emperor Charles V.?"

"Does your Highness order me to stop, or permit me to continue?"

"Continue! but why not answer my question?"

"Because the progress of my narrative will, I fancy, render that question useless."

"Continue, then, sir," said Emmanuel Philibert.

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XII.

WHAT PASSED IN THE DUNGEON OF THE FORTRESS OF MILAN ON THE NIGHT OF THE 14TH AND 15TH OF NOVEMBER, 1534.

"A FEW minutes after nine," returned Odoardo, "the jailer came to warn the countess that it was time to withdraw. The sentries were about to be changed, and it was well the sentinel who had seen her enter should see her leave. The separation was cruel; and yet in three hours they would see each other again, never more to be separated. The child uttered piteous cries, and refused to abandon her father. The countess had almost to tear her from his arms. They passed the sentinel again, and plunged into the darkest depths of the courtyard. From the place where they were they gained, with infinite precautions, and without being seen, the house of the jailer. Once there, the countess and her daughter were shut up in a cabinet, and bidden not to utter a single word or make a single movement, as an inspector might at any moment enter the jailer's residence. The countess and her child kept themselves dumb and motionless. One hazardous movement, one whispered word, might deprive a father and husband of life.

"The three hours that still remained till midnight appeared as long to the countess as the forty-eight hours that had slipped by. At last the jailer opened the door.

"'Come!' he said, in a low voice, — a voice so low that the countess and her daughter guessed what this man intended to say, rather than what he said.

"The mother had not wished to leave her child, in order that the father, on escaping, might give her a last kiss.

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Besides, there are moments when, for an empire, one would not separate from those one loves.

"Did she know what was about to happen, this poor mother who was fighting for the life of her husband with his executioners? Might she also not be forced to fly, either with her husband, or on her own account? And if she had to fly, could she part with her child?

"The jailer pushed the bed aside; an opening two and a half feet high and two feet wide had been made in the wall behind.

"It was more than was needed for all the prisoners in the fortress to escape, one after another. Preceded by the jailer, the mother and child entered the first dungeon. After their passage, the wife of the jailer replaced the bed, in which a boy of four years was sleeping. The jailer, as I have said, had the key of the first dungeon; he opened the door of it, having first taken good care to oil the lock and the bolts, and found himself in the dungeon of the count. The latter had received, an hour before, a file with which to cut through his chain; but, unaccustomed to such labour, and, besides, fearing to be heard by the sentry, who was walking in the corridor, he was hardly half through the work. The jailer took the file in his turn; and, while the count clasped his wife and child in his arms, began filing the chain. Suddenly he lifted his head, and remained listening, with one knee on the ground, his body resting on the hand that held the file, and the other hand extended in the direction of the door. The count wished to question him.

"'Silence!' he said; 'something unusual is passing in the fortress!'

"'Oh, my God!' murmured the countess, frightened.

"'Silence!' repeated the jailer.

"Every one was silent; they held their breath as if they would never breathe again. These four individuals resembled a group of bronze, representing all the shades of fear, from astonishment to terror. A slow and deep noise was

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heard, increasing as it approached. It was that of several persons in line of march. By the measured footfall of the steps it might be gathered that among these persons was a certain number of soldiers.

"'Come!' said the jailer, taking the countess and the child each by an arm, and dragging them with him, 'come! It is doubtless some night visit, some round of the governor. But, in any case, you must not be seen. As soon as the visitors have quitted the dungeon of the count, if, indeed, they enter it, we can resume the work where we left off.'

"The countess and her daughter opposed a weak resistance. Besides, the prisoner himself pushed them towards the door. They passed out of it, followed by the jailer, who closed it after them. As I have told your Highness, there was in the second dungeon a grated door, opening into the first, and through which, thanks to the darkness and the closeness of the bars, one could see everything without being seen.

"The countess held her daughter in her arms. The mother and child, hardly breathing, glued their faces to the bars to see what was going to happen.

"The hope they had for a moment entertained, that the business of the new-comers was not with the count, was soon dissipated. The procession halted at the door of the dungeon, and the key was heard grating in the lock. At the spectacle presented to her eyes the countess could hardly refrain from a cry of terror; it was evident the jailer guessed as much.

"'Not a word, madame; not a syllable! not a gesture, whatever happens! or — '

"He thought for a moment what means he should adopt to impose silence on the countess; then, drawing a thin, sharp blade from his breast, —

"'Or I poniard your child!' he said.

"'Wretch!' stammered the countess.

"'Oh!' he replied, "each one here must think of his

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own life; and that of a poor jailer is, in the eyes of the poor jailer, of as much value as that of a noble countess!'

"The countess placed her hand on the mouth of the child in order to silence the child. As to herself, after the threat of the jailer, she was sure she would not let a sound escape.

"This is what the countess saw from the other side of the door, and what had torn from her the cry stifled by the jailer.

"First, two men, clad in black, and having each a torch in his hand; behind them, a man bearing a parchment unfolded, from which hung a big red seal; behind this man, another man, masked, and muffled in a brown robe; behind the man masked, a priest. They entered, one by one, into the dungeon without the countess betraying her emotion by a word or by a gesture; and, however, when they entered, the poor woman saw, outlined in the shadow of the corridor, a group still more sinister! Facing the door was a man wearing a costume half black, half red, his two hands resting on the hilt of a long broad naked sword. Behind him were six Brothers of Mercy, clad in black-hooded cloaks, with openings for the eyes only, and bearing a bier on their shoulders. Finally, beyond them were seen the moustaches of a dozen soldiers drawn up against the wall. The two men holding the torches, the man holding a parchment, the man masked, and the priest entered, as I have said, into the dungeon. Then the door was shut, leaving outside the executioner, the Brothers of Mercy, and the soldiers.

"The count was standing, leaning against the gloomy prison-wall, from which loomed out his pale features. His eye sought, behind the bars of the door, the direction of the frightened eyes he could not see, but which he guessed were glued to those bars. Those spectral visitors, mute and unlooked for though they were, left him no doubt as to the fate that awaited him. Besides, if he had had the good fortune to have reason for doubting, his doubt would not have been of long duration.

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"The two men bearing torches placed themselves, the one on his right, the other on his left; the masked man and the priest stayed near the door; the man holding the parchment advanced.

"'Count,' he asked, 'do you believe that you are fit to meet God?'

"'As fit as one can be,' replied the count, in a calm voice, 'who has nothing to reproach himself with.'

"'So much the better!' replied the man with the parchment; 'for you are condemned, and I am come to read your sentence of death.'

"'Pronounced by what tribunal?' asked the count, ironically.

"'By the all-powerful justice of the duke.'

"'On what accusation?'

"'On that of the most august emperor, Charles V.'

"'It is well. I am ready to hear the sentence.'

"'On your knees, count! It is on his knees that a man about to die should hear the sentence that condemns him.'

"'When he is guilty, but not when he is innocent.'

"'Count, you are not beyond the common law: on your knees! or we shall be constrained to employ force.'

"'Try!' said the count.

"'Let him stand,' said the masked man; 'let him cross himself only, in order to place himself under the protection of the Lord!'

"The count started at the sound of this voice.

"'Duke Sforza,' he said, turning toward the masked man, 'I thank you.'

"'Oh, it is the duke,' murmured the countess; 'perhaps I might prevail on him to pardon.'

"'Silence, madame, if you value the life of your child!' said the jailer, in a whisper.

"The countess gave utterance to a groan which was heard by the count, and made him start. He hazarded a gesture with his hand, which meant 'Courage!' then, as

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the masked man had invited him, he said aloud, making the sign of the cross, —

"'In the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.'

"'*Amen!*' murmured those present.

"Thereupon the man with the parchment began to read the sentence. It was rendered in the name of Duke Francesco Maria Sforza, at the request of the Emperor Charles V., and it condemned Francesco Maraviglia, agent of the King of France, to be executed at night, in a dungeon, as a *traitor, spy, and betrayer of state secrets.*

"A second groan reached the ear of the count, — a groan so faint that he alone was able, not to perceive, but to divine it.

"He turned his gaze towards the spot from which this doleful sound came.

"'Unjust as is the sentence of the duke,' he said, 'I receive it without trouble and without anger. However, as the man who cannot defend his life ought to defend his honour, I appeal from the sentence of the duke.'

"'And to whom?' asked the masked man.

"'To my king and master, François I., in the first place, and then to the future and to God! — to God, in whose hands are all men, and particularly princes, kings, and emperors.'

"'Is it the only tribunal to which you appeal?' said the masked man.

"'Yes, and I summon you to appear before that tribunal, Duke Francesco Maria Sforza!'

"'And pray when?' retorted the masked man.

"'In the same time that Jacques de Molay, Grand Master of the Templars, assigned to his judge; that is to say, in a year and a day. To-day is the 15th of November, 1534; on the 16th of November, 1535, then — Do you hear me, Duke Francesco Maria Sforza?'

"And he stretched forth his hand toward the masked man to emphasise the menace and the summons. But for the mask hiding the face of the duke, his paleness would

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have been visible to all; for it was he, beyond all doubt, who was present at the agony of his victim. For a moment it was the condemned who triumphed, and the judge who trembled before him.

"'It is well,' said the duke; 'you have a quarter of an hour to pass with this holy man before undergoing your sentence.'

"And he pointed to the priest.

"'Try to finish in a quarter of an hour, for you shall not have a minute longer.'

"Then, turning to the man of God, —

"'Father,' he said, 'do your duty.'

"And he left, with the two torch-bearers and the man with the parchment.

"But he left the door wide open behind him, in order that his eyes and the eyes of the soldiers might be able to see the interior of the dungeon, and follow all the movements of the condemned, whom he had only quitted through respect for the rite of compassion and so as not to hear the voice of the penitent.

"Another sigh passed through the bars, and touched gently the palpitating heart of the condemned. The countess had hoped that the door might be shut on him and the priest, and — who knows? — perhaps by supplication and tears, the sight of a wife on her knees praying for her husband, of a child praying for her father, might prevail on the man of God to consent to turn aside his head, and let the count escape.

"It was the last hope of my poor mother; it failed her — "

Emmanuel Philibert started. Sometimes he forgot that this recital was made by a son who was relating the last moments of his father. It seemed to him as if he was reading the pages of some terrible legend.

Then, on a sudden, a word recalled him to reality, and made him comprehend that the recital did not issue from the pen of a cold historian, but fell from the lips of a son, a living chronicle of the agony of his father.

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"Yes, it was the last hope of my poor mother; it failed her!" repeated Odoardo, pausing a moment in his narration, on seeing the movement of Emmanuel. "For," he continued, "on the other side of the door, lit by the two torches and by the glare of the smoky lamps of the corridor, the dismal spectacle was still there, terrible as a vision, deadly as reality. The priest alone remained near the count, as I have told you. The count, without disturbing himself as to from whom this last consoler came, knelt before him. Then began the confession, — a strange confession, in which the man about to die did not seem to think of himself, but to be preoccupied only with others; in which the words said to the priest were really addressed to the wife and child, and ascended to God only after having passed through the hearts of a mother and a daughter! My sister alone, if she still lives, could recount the tears with which this confession was received; for I was not there. I, a merry lad, was playing, laughing, singing, perhaps, ignorant of what was passing within three hundred leagues of me, at the very moment when my father, at the threshold of death, was speaking of his absent son to my weeping mother and sister!"

Oppressed by this memory, Odoardo stopped an instant; then he resumed, stifling a sigh: —

"The quarter of an hour was soon passed. The masked man, with a watch in his hand, followed the face of priest and penitent; but when the fifteen minutes had elapsed, —

"'Count,' he said, 'the time allotted you to remain among the living has expired. The priest has finished his task; it is for the executioner now to do his.'

"The priest gave the count absolution, and rose. Then, pointing to the crucifix, he retired backward towards the door, and as the priest retired, the executioner advanced. The count remained on his knees. 'Have you any last petition to address to Duke Sforza or to Charles V.?'

"'I have no petition to address to any one but God,' replied the count.

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"'Then you are ready?' asked the same man.

"'You see it, since I am on my knees.'

"And, in fact, the count was on his knees, his face turned towards the bars of that gloomy door through which his wife and child were looking at him. His mouth, which seemed to continue to pray, sent them words of love, which was still a last prayer.

"'If you do not wish my hand to sully you, count,' said a voice behind the victim, 'pull down the collar of your shirt. You are a gentleman, and I have no right to touch you except with the blade of my sword.'

"The count, without answering, pulled his shirt down to his shoulders, and remained with the neck bare.

"'Good and Gracious Lord!' said the count, 'Almighty and Merciful God, into Thy hands I commend my spirit!'

"He had scarcely said the words when the sword of the executioner flamed and hissed in the darkness, like a flash of lightning, and the head of the victim fell from his shoulders, rolling, as if with a last impulse of love, to the foot of the grated door. A hoarse, muffled cry was heard at the same time, and also the noise of a body falling backward.

"But the bystanders believed this cry was the last sound uttered by the victim; the noise they thought was made by his body falling on the flagstone of the dungeon —

"Excuse me, monseigneur," said Odoardo, stopping; "but if you wish to hear the rest I must have a glass of water, for I feel faint."

And, in fact, Emmanuel Philibert saw that the narrator of this terrible history was pale and tottering. He ran forward to support him, placed him on a pile of cushions, and gave him the glass of water he asked for.

The sweat was running down the forehead of the prince, and, soldier though he was, accustomed to fields of battle, he seemed as near fainting as he whom he was succouring.

At the end of ten minutes Odoardo recovered.

"Would you know more, monseigneur?" he asked.

"I wish to know everything, sir," said Emmanuel;

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"such narratives as yours are great lessons for princes who are some day to reign."

"Be it so," answered the young man; "besides, the most terrible part is finished."

He wiped the perspiration from his forehead with his hand, and perhaps, also, his eyes, wet with tears at the same time, and continued: —

"When my mother recovered her senses, everything had vanished like a vision, and she might have believed she had had a bad dream, if she had not found herself lying on the bed of the jailer. Such terrible orders had been given by her to my sister not to cry, for fear her sobs might be heard, that, although the poor child believed she had lost both father and mother, she regarded the latter with wide, scared eyes, from which the tears were flowing; but these tears continued to flow from the eyes of the child as silently for the mother as they did for the father. The jailer was no longer there; there remained only his wife. She took pity on the countess, and made her put on one of her garments; she dressed my sister in a suit of her son's, and at daybreak she set out with them and guided them on the road to Novara; then she gave two ducats to the countess, and recommended her to God.

"My poor mother seemed pursued by a terrible vision. She did not dream either of returning to the palace and taking some money out of it, nor of finding the carriage in which the count was to escape; she was mad with terror. Her only care was to fly, to cross the frontier, to quit the territories of the Duke of Milan. She disappeared with her child in the neighbourhood of Novara, and nothing further was heard of her. What has become of my mother? What has become of my sister? I am utterly ignorant of their fate! The news of the death of my father reached Paris. It was the king himself who informed me of it, at the same time telling me I should never want his protection, and that he was about to exact vengeance for the assassination of the count by war.

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"I asked the king's permission to accompany him. Fortune, at the beginning, favoured the arms of France. We crossed the states of your father, of which the king took possession; then we arrived at Milan.

"Duke Sforza had taken refuge with Paul III., at Rome.

"An inquiry was made into the murder of my father; but it was impossible to find any one who had taken a share in this murder, or had been present at it. Three days after the execution the executioner suddenly died. The name of the usher who read the sentence was unknown. The jailer had taken flight with his wife and son.

"Thus, in spite of all inquiries, I could not even discover the spot where the body of my father rested. Twenty years had elapsed since those useless inquiries when I received a letter dated from Avignon.

"A man, who merely signed his initials, invited me to come at once to Avignon if I wished to gain reliable information on the fate of my father, Comte Francesco de Maraviglia. He gave me the name and address of a priest whose mission it would be to conduct me to him if I accepted the invitation.

"The letter offered me that which was the desire of my whole life; I set out on the very instant. I went straight to the priest; the priest was prepared. He led me to the writer. It was the jailer of the fortress of Milan. Seeing my father dead, and knowing the spot where the carriage was waiting with two hundred thousand ducats, the evil spirit tempted him. He had placed my mother on his bed, recommending her to his wife; then he let himself down by means of a rope-ladder, crept up behind the coachman, who was waiting for my father, saying that he came from the latter, stabbed him, and, after throwing his body into the fosse, continued on his way, taking the carriage with him.

"Once over the frontier, he took post-horses, gained Avignon, sold the carriage, and, as no one ever claimed

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its contents, he appropriated the two hundred thousand ducats. He then wrote to his wife and son to join him.

"But the hand of God was on this man. His wife died first; next, after wasting away for ten years, the son joined the mother; at last, he felt that his own turn would soon come for rendering an account to God of what he had done during his passage through this world. It was this summons from on high that made him repent and think of me. You understand, therefore, what was his object in wishing to see me.

"It was to confess everything to me, and to ask my pardon; not for the death of my father, with which he had no concern, but for the murder of the coachman and the robbery of the hundred thousand ducats. As to the man assassinated, there was no remedy for the crime; the man was dead.

"But as to the hundred thousand ducats, he had purchased with them a castle and a magnificent property at Ville-neuve-lez-Avignon, on the revenues of which he lived.

"I began by making him relate to me all the details of the death of my father, not once, but ten times. For that matter, the night had appeared so terrible to him that no incident escaped him, and he recalled the slightest details of the sinister event as if it had passed the evening before. Unfortunately, he knew nothing of my mother and sister except what his wife had told him, who lost sight of them on the road to Novara. They must have perished of hunger and fatigue!

"I was rich, and had no need of this increase of fortune; but a day might arrive when my mother and sister would reappear. Not wishing to dishonour this man by a public declaration of his crime, I had him make a gift of this castle and estate to the Comtesse de Maraviglia and her daughter. Then, as far as in me lay, and as God gave me power, I pardoned him.

"But there my mercy ended. Francesco Maria Sforza

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died in 1535, a year and a day after the summons given him by my father to appear before the tribunal of God. I had nothing further, therefore, to do with him; he was punished for his weakness, if not for his crime.

"But there remained the Emperor Charles V., — the emperor at the pinnacle of his power, at the summit of his glory, at the height of his prosperity! It was he who had remained unpunished; it was he I resolved to strike.

"You will say that the men who bear the crown and sceptre are to be judged only by God; but sometimes God seems to forget.

"It is for men then to remember. I remembered, — that is all. But I was ignorant that the emperor wore, under his clothes, a coat of mail. He, too, remembered! I am Odoardo Maraviglia, and I wished to slay the emperor, because he had my father assassinated by night, and caused my mother and sister to die of hunger and fatigue!

"I have spoken. Now, monseigneur, you know the truth. I wished to kill; I deserve to be killed; but I am a gentleman, and I demand the death of a gentleman."

Emmanuel Philibert bowed his head in token of assent.

"It is just," he said, "and your demand shall be granted. Do you desire to be free up to the moment of execution? By *being free*, I mean not being bound."

"What must I do for this?"

"Give me your word of honour not to escape."

"You have it already."

"Renew it to me, then."

"I renew it; only make haste. The crime is public; the confession is complete. What is the use of making me wait?"

"It is not for me to fix the hour of the death of a man. It must be according to the good pleasure of the Emperor Charles V."

Then, summoning the sergeant, —

"Conduct this gentleman to a private tent," said Emmanuel, "and let him want for nothing! A single sen-

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tinel will suffice to guard him: I have his parole as a gentleman. Go!"

The sergeant left, taking the prisoner with him. Emmanuel Philibert followed him with his eyes until he was some distance from his tent. Then, as he thought he heard a feeble sound behind him, he turned.

Leona was standing on the threshold of the second compartment, the tapestry of which had fallen behind her.

It was the noise made by this tapestry falling which had attracted the attention of Emmanuel Philibert.

Leona had her hands clasped; her face bore the trace of the tears she had no doubt shed at the recital of the prisoner.

"What do you want?" asked the prince.

"I want to say to you," she said, — "I want to say to you that this man must not die!"

The countenance of Emmanuel became overcast.

"Leona," said Emmanuel, "you have not reflected on what you ask. This man has committed a horrible crime, if not in fact, at least in intention."

"No matter," replied Leona, throwing her arms around the prince's neck; "I repeat to you, this man must not die!"

"The emperor will decide his lot, Leona. The only thing I can do is to report everything to the emperor."

"And I tell you, though the emperor condemned this young man to a death of shame, you would still obtain his pardon, would you not, Emmanuel?"

"Leona, you believe I have a power over the emperor I do not really possess. The imperial justice must follow its course. If it condemns —"

"Even if it condemned, still must Odoardo Maraviglia live; you hear me? He must live, my dearest Emmanuel!"

"And why, pray?"

"Because," replied Leona, — "because he is my brother!"

Emmanuel uttered a cry of amazement.

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That woman dying of hunger and fatigue on the bank of the Sesia, that child obstinately keeping the secret of her birth and sex, that page refusing the diamond of Charles V., — all was explained by those four words which had just escaped from Leona in reference to Odoardo Maraviglia, "He is my brother!"

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XIII.

THE DEMON OF THE SOUTH.

At the very time the scene we have related was passing under the tent of Emmanuel Philibert, a great event, announced by flourishes of trumpets and hurrying of soldiers, was creating excitement in the imperial camp.

A little troop of horsemen had been distinguished coming from the direction of Brussels; couriers had been sent forward to meet this troop, and had returned galloping and making great signs of joy. They announced that the leader of the cavalcade was no less a person than the only son of the most august emperor, Philip, Prince of Spain, King of Naples, and husband of the Queen of England.

Amid the flourishes of trumpets and the cheers of the first who perceived the prince, all left their tents and hurried to greet the new-comer.

Philip was mounted on a handsome white steed, which he managed gracefully enough. He was clad in violet mantle and black tunic, — the two mourning colours of kings; his breeches were violet also, and he had on immense boots of buffalo leather, and wore a little black cap, such as was the fashion at the period, adorned with a silken band and a black plume.

Round his neck was the collar of the Golden Fleece. He was then a man of twenty-eight years, of middle height, rather fat than lean, with cheeks somewhat puffed, a blond beard, close, thin lips that rarely smiled, a straight nose, and eyes that trembled under their lashes like those of hares. Although he was handsome rather than ugly, the *ensemble* of his physiognomy had nothing sympa-

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thetic; and it might be easily seen that under that brow, wrinkled before its time, were harboured gloomy rather than pleasant thoughts.

The emperor had a great affection for him. As he had loved his mother, he loved his son. But whenever a caress drew the two hearts together, he felt that the prince's was enveloped in a sheeting of ice which no embrace could ever melt.

Sometimes, when he was long without seeing his son, when he could no longer try to penetrate with his eyes the troubled and shifting look of the young prince, he would anxiously meditate in what direction this darksome miner, eternally occupied with underground intrigues, was burrowing in the interests of his ambition. Was it against their common enemies? Was it against himself? And with this doubt in his heart, he would let some of those terrible words escape which Emmanuel Philibert had heard that very morning with reference to the prisoner.

The birth of the young prince had been as gloomy as his life was to be. There are gloomy dawns which are reflections of the entire day. The emperor received the news of his birth, which took place on Tuesday, the 31st of May, 1527, at the same time as that of the death of the Connétable de Bourbon, the sack of Rome, and the captivity of Clement VII. All rejoicings were forbidden at this birth, for fear it might form a contrast with the universal mourning of Christendom.

Only a year after the royal heir was recognised as Prince of Spain. Then there were grand festivals; but the child who as a man was to cause the shedding of so many tears, — the child did nothing but weep during these festivals.

He had just reached his sixteenth year, when the emperor wishing to make trial of him in war, ordered him to compel the French, commanded by the dauphin, to raise the siege of Perpignan; but in order that he might not run the risk of any check in this enterprise, he was accom-

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panied by six grandees of Spain, fourteen barons, eight hundred gentlemen, two thousand cavalry, and five thousand infantry.

Against such a reinforcement of fresh troops no headway could be made. The French raised the siege, and the Infante of Spain began his military career with a victory.

But after the report he ordered to be laid before him of this campaign, Charles V. easily understood that the instincts of his son were not warlike. He reserved, therefore, to himself the risks of war and the uncertain fortunes of battles, leaving to the heir of his power the study of politics, for which he seemed to have a natural bent.

At sixteen, the young prince had made such progress in this great art of government that Charles V. did not hesitate to name him governor of all the kingdoms of Spain.

In 1534 he married Doña Maria of Portugal, his cousin-german, born in the same year as himself, and even in the very hour.

He had a son, Don Carlos, the hero of a lamentable history, and of two or three tragedies. This son was born in 1545.

In fine, in 1548, Philip left Barcelona for the purpose of visiting Italy in the midst of a frightful storm, which had scattered the fleet of Doria, and forced it to return for the moment into port; with a contrary wind, he attempted the voyage again, landed at Genoa, from Genoa proceeded to Milan, explored the battle-field of Pavia, required to be shown the spot where François I. surrendered his sword, and measured with his eyes the depth of the ditch in which the French monarchy was near being buried; then, taciturn and silent as ever, he quitted Milan, crossed central Italy, and joined the emperor at Worms. Then Charles V., Flemish by birth and heart, presented him to his fellow-countrymen of Namur and Brussels.

At Namur, Emmanuel Philibert received him, and did him the honours of the city. The two cousins embraced each other tenderly at their meeting, and afterwards

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Emmanuel gave him the spectacle of a little war, in which, it may be well conceived, Philip did not take any part.

The festivals were not less sumptuous at Brussels than at Namur. Seven hundred princes, barons, and gentlemen received outside the gates the heir of the greatest monarchy in the world. Then when this heir had been fully recognised and seen, his father sent him back to Spain.

Emmanuel Philibert accompanied him to Genoa. It was during this journey that the Prince of Savoy saw his father for the last time.

Three years after the return of Philip into Spain, King Edward VI. of England died, leaving the crown to his sister Mary, daughter of Catherine, that aunt whom the emperor loved so much that he learned English, he said, for no other reason except to speak to her.

The new queen was pressed to choose a husband. She was forty-six years old; consequently, she had little time to lose. Charles V. proposed his son Philip.

Philip had lost that charming Doña Maria, who had lived only the age of the flowers. Four days after the birth of Don Carlos, the women of the queen, curious to see a magnificent auto-da-fé, left the new mother alone in front of a table covered with fruits. The sick woman had been forbidden to eat of those fruits. A daughter of Eve on all points, the poor princess disregarded the injunction. She rose, bit with her beautiful young teeth, not into an apple, but into a melon, and in twenty-four hours was dead.

Nothing, therefore, prevented Don Philip from marrying Mary Tudor, from uniting England and Spain, and stifling France between the island of the North and the peninsula of the South.

It was the grand aim of the union.

Philip had two rivals for the hand of his cousin. They were Cardinal Pole, a cardinal without being a priest, — son of George, Duke of Clarence, brother of Edward IV.,

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consequently, cousin to the queen in nearly the same degree of relationship as Philip; and the Earl of Courtenay, nephew of Henry VIII., consequently, as nearly related as the two others to Mary.

Charles V. began by making sure of the support of Mary herself; and having gained this support through the influence of Father Henry, her confessor, he did not hesitate to act.

The Princess Mary was an ardent Catholic. The title of "Bloody Mary," given to her by successive English historians, is a proof of it.

The emperor began then by banishing from her presence the Earl of Courtenay, a young man of thirty-two, handsome as an angel and brave as a Courtenay. He accused him of being a zealous protector of heresy; and, in fact, Mary regarded the two of her ministers who were most favourable to this marriage as strongly tainted with that false religion of which her father had made himself the Pope, in order to have no further connection with the *bishops of Rome*, as he called them.

This point having been well fixed in the mind of the queen, Courtenay was no longer to be feared.

Remained Cardinal Pole, perhaps less brave than Courtenay, but as handsome as he, and assuredly more of a statesman, raised as he had been in the school of the popes.

Cardinal Pole was so much the more to be feared that, before being crowned, Mary Tudor, with or without intention, had written to Pope Julius III. to send Cardinal Pole to her as apostolic legate in order that the latter might labour with her in the holy task of re-establishing their religion. Luckily for Charles V., the Pope, who knew what Pole had to suffer under Henry VIII., and what dangers he had encountered, hesitated sending all at once, in the midst of the fermentation that reigned in England, a prelate of his distinction. He despatched, therefore, first, John Francis Commendon, master of the chamber, to act

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near Mary; but the queen wanted Pole, and not Commendon. She dismissed the latter, begging him to hasten the arrival of the cardinal.

Pole started; but the emperor had his spies at Rome. He was informed of this departure; and as the legate *a latere* was to cross Germany, and pass by Innspruck, Charles V. ordered Mendoza, who commanded a body of cavalry in this city, to arrest Cardinal Pole on his passage, on the ground that he was too nearly related to the queen to give her disinterested advice in the matter of her marriage with Don Philip.

Mendoza was the kind of captain needed by princes in such circumstances. He had ears only for the word of command. His orders were to arrest Cardinal Pole; he arrested him and kept him prisoner until the articles of the marriage contract between Philip of Spain and Mary of England were signed.

These articles being signed, he was released. Pole took it as a man of good sense should, and filled the office of legate *a latere* not only to Mary, but to Philip.

One of the articles declared that Mary Tudor, Queen of England, could only marry a king; this did not embarrass Charles V.; he made his son Philip King of Naples.

This success somewhat consoled the emperor, saddened by the two checks he had experienced: the one at Innspruck, where, surprised in the night by Duke Maurice, he had fled so precipitately that he forgot he had put on his baldrick and forgotten his sword; the other before Metz, the siege of which he had been forced to raise, abandoning, in the slush and mud caused by a thaw, his cannon, war material, and a third of his army.

"Oh," he cried, "fortune is then returning to me at last!"

Finally, on the 24th of July, 1554, — that is to say, nine months before the period at which we are arrived, — the very day of the feast of Saint-James, protector of Spain, Mary of England was united to Philip of Spain. She who

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might be called the *Tigress of the North* was united to him who was to be the *Demon of the South*. Philip set out from Spain accompanied by twenty-two vessels of war, carrying six thousand men; but before entering Hampton port, he dismissed all these, having decided to approach England with only the ships which Queen Mary sent to meet him. These numbered eighteen. They were preceded by the largest vessel ever built in England, and which was launched for this occasion.

The vessels advanced to meet the prince a distance of three leagues from the shore; and there, amid discharges of artillery and rolling of drums and flourishes of clarions, Philip passed from his own ship into that supplied by his betrothed.

He was followed by sixty gentlemen, twelve being grandees of Spain; among them, the Duke of Medina-Cœli and Ruy Gomez de Silva had each forty pages and valets. "In fine, it was reckoned a marvellous thing, and what was never before seen," says Gregorio Leti, the historian of Charles V., "that these sixty lords had among them twelve hundred and thirty pages and attendants." The marriage was celebrated at Windsor. Those who wish to know how Queen Mary met her husband, what robe she wore, what jewels adorned her, what was the form of the amphitheatre surmounted by two thrones which awaited the two spouses; those who wish to penetrate further still, and learn the manner in which Mass was celebrated, the manner in which their Majesties sat down to table, in fine, that in which "they arose *so adroitly* from table, that although there were before them a quantity of lords and ladies, they disappeared through a secret door, and withdrew into their chamber," — will find these details and many others in the historian we have just quoted.

As to ourselves, interesting and picturesque as those details are, they would lead us too far, and we shall return to the King of England and Naples, Philip II., who, after nine months of marriage, appeared again on the Continent,

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and at the moment when he was least expected, arrived, as we have said, at the barriers of the camp, saluted by the rolling of drums, the flourishes of trumpets, and by the cheers of the German and Spanish soldiers who joined his train.

Charles V. had been one of the first to be informed of the unexpected arrival of his son; and glad that Philip had no motive (so it appeared, at least) for concealing his presence from him in Flanders, since he was come to find him in his camp, he made an effort, and, supported by the arms of one of his officers, he dragged himself to the door of his tent.

He was hardly there when he perceived Don Philip advancing towards him, amid shouts, drums, and trumpets, as if he were already master and lord.

"Well, well," murmured Charles V., "it is the will of God!" But as soon as Philip perceived his father, he brought his horse to a standstill, and leaped to the ground; then approaching, with his arms stretched out and head uncovered and bent, he threw himself at the feet of the emperor.

This humility chased every bad thought from the mind of Charles V. He raised Philip, pressed him in his arms, and, turning towards those who formed the train of the prince, —

"Thanks, gentlemen," he said, "for having divined the joy the presence of my beloved son was to cause, and for having announced it beforehand by your cheers and hurrahs." Then to his son, "Don Philip," he said, "it is nearly five years since we have seen each other; come, we have many things to converse about."

And saluting all this crowd, soldiers and officers assembled before his tent, he leaned on the arm of his son, and returned to the pavilion amid cries a thousand times repeated of "Long live the King of England!" and "Long live the Emperor of Germany!" and "Long live Don Philip!" and "Long live Charles V.!"

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In fact, as the emperor had presupposed, Philip had very many things to say to him. And yet, after Charles V. was seated on the divan, and Philip, refusing the honour of sitting beside his father, had taken a chair, there was a moment's silence.

It was Charles V. who first broke this silence, which Philip had kept perhaps through respect for his father.

"My son," said the emperor, "nothing but your dear presence could dissipate the bad impression produced on me by the ill news received to-day."

"The most fatal news of all was already known to me, as you can see by my garb, my father," answered Philip; "we have had the misfortune to lose, you a mother, I a grandmother."

"You have learned this news in Belgium, have you not, my son?"

Philip bowed.

"In England, sire, our communications with Spain are quite direct, while the courier your Majesty has received has been obliged to come here from Genoa by land; this must have delayed him."

"Yes, it must be as you say," said Charles V.; "but apart from this motive of sorrow, my son, I have another subject for anxiety."

"Does your Majesty wish to speak of the election of Paul IV., and of the league he has proposed to the King of France, — a league which must be signed at this hour?"

Charles V. regarded Don Philip with astonishment.

"My son," said he, "is it also an English vessel which has made you as well informed as you are on this point? The passage, however, from Civita Vecchia to Portsmouth is long."

"No, sire, the news has come to us from France; hence it happens that I know it before you. The passages of the Alps and Tyrol are still encumbered with snows, and have delayed your messenger; while ours came straight from Ostia to Marseilles, from Marseilles to Boulogne, and from Boulogne to London."

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Charles V. frowned. He had long believed it was his right to be informed of every grave event that happened in the world; and here was his son, who knew before him, not only the death of Queen Juana and the election of Paul IV., but announced to him a thing of which he was ignorant; namely, the league signed between Henri II. and the new Pope.

But Philip did not appear to perceive the astonishment of his father.

"For that matter," he continued, "all measures were so well taken by Caraffa and his partisans that the treaty was sent to the King of France during the conclave. This explains the boldness with which, after taking Marienbourg, Henri II. marched on Bouvines and on Dinant, with the aim, no doubt, of cutting off your retreat."

"Oh, oh!" exclaimed Charles, "has he advanced as far as you say, and am I threatened with a new surprise like that of Innspruck?"

"No," said Philip, "for I hope your Majesty will not refuse to conclude a truce with Henri II."

"By my soul!" cried the emperor, "I should be very foolish if I refused it, and even if I did not propose it."

"Sire," said Philip, "such a truce proposed by you would render the King of France too proud. And so Queen Mary and I have had the idea of devoting ourselves to this task in the interest of your dignity."

"And you are come to ask from me authority to act? Be it so: act; lose no time; send the most skilful ambassadors to France, — they can never arrive too soon."

"It is what we have thought of, sire; and we have sent, reserving to your Majesty full liberty to repudiate us, Cardinal Pole to King Henri to ask a truce."

Charles shook his head.

"He will not arrive in time," he said; "and Henri will be in Brussels before Pole has landed at Calais."

"Consequently Pole has gone by Ostend, and has joined the King of France at Dinant."

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"However able a negotiator he may be," said Charles V., with a sigh, "I doubt of his success in such a negotiation."

"I am then very happy to announce to your Majesty that he has succeeded," said Philip. "The King of France accepts, if not a truce, at least a suspension of arms, during which the conditions of a truce will be regulated. The monastery of Vocelles, near Cambrai, has been selected by him as the place where the conferences are to be held, and Cardinal Pole, on coming to Brussels to announce to me the result of his mission, told me he did not believe there would be any difficulty in coming to an arrangement."

Charles V. regarded Philip with a certain admiration; the latter, in the most humble fashion imaginable, had just announced to him the happy issue of a negotiation which he had regarded as impossible.

"What will be the duration of this truce?" he said.

"Real or conventional?"

"Conventional."

"Five years, sire."

"And real?"

"As long as it shall please God."

"And how long do you believe, Don Philip, that its continuance is likely to be pleasing to God?"

"Why," said the King of England, with an imperceptible smile, "just the time necessary for you to draw from Spain a reinforcement of ten thousand Spaniards and for me to send you ten thousand Englishmen from England."

"My son," said Charles V., "this truce was my most ardent desire; and as it is you who have made it, I promise you that it shall be you who will keep it or break it according to your good pleasure."

"I do not understand what my august emperor means," said Philip, whose self-control could not prevent him from darting from his eyes a flash of hope and covetousness.

He had just got a glimpse, almost within reach of his hand, of the sceptre of Spain and the Low Countries, and — who knows? — perhaps of the imperial crown.

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Eight days after, a truce was signed in these terms: —

"There shall be a truce for five years, as well on sea as on land, to be equally enjoyed by all the people, states, kingdoms, and provinces of the Emperor, the King of France, and King Philip.

"During all this space of time of five years, there shall be a suspension of hostilities, and, however, each of these potentates shall keep whatever he has taken in the course of the war.

"His Holiness Paul IV. is comprehended in this truce."

Philip himself presented this treaty to the emperor, who cast an almost frightened glance on the impassive countenance of his son.

All that was wanting to the treaty was the signature of Charles V.

Charles V. signed.

Then, when with infinite difficulty he had traced the seven letters of his name, —

"Sire," said he, giving for the first time this title to his son, "return to London, and be ready to meet me at Brussels on my first summons."

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XIV.

IN WHICH CHARLES V. KEEPS THE PROMISE MADE TO HIS SON DON PHILIP.

On Friday the 25th of October, 1555, there were great crowds in the streets of the city of Brussels, not only of the people of the capital of southern Brabant, but of the other Flemish states of the Emperor Charles V.

All this multitude was pressing towards the royal palace, which no longer exists, but which then towered over the city from the summit of Caudenberg.

The occasion of this excitement was that a great assembly, the cause of which was yet unknown, had been convoked by the emperor, and, having been adjourned once before, was to be held to-day.

For this reason, the interior of the grand hall had been adorned and hung with tapestry on the eastern side, — that is to say, in the direction of the barriers, — and a sort of scaffold had been there constructed, covered with magnificent carpets, and surmounted by a dais with the imperial arms, protecting three armchairs, empty for the time, but evidently destined to be soon occupied: that in the centre by the emperor, that on the right by Don Philip, who had arrived the evening before, and that on the left by Charles V.'s sister, Mary of Austria, Queen Dowager of Hungary.

Benches were arranged parallel to these three chairs, and formed with them a kind of hemicycle.

Other seats were placed in front of the platform, arranged like the benches in a theatre.

King Philip, Queen Mary, Queen Eleonore, widow of François I., Maximilian, King of Bohemia, Christina,

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Duchesse de Lorraine, had taken possession of their apartments at the palace. Charles alone continued to inhabit what he called his little house in the park.

At four in the afternoon he left this little house, mounted on a mule, whose gentle pace made him suffer less than any other mode of locomotion. As to going on foot, it was impossible to dream of it: the attacks of the gout had redoubled in violence; and the emperor was not sure even that he could walk from the threshold of the door to the scaffold of the grand hall, or that he would not have to be carried during that short passage. Kings and princes followed the mule of the emperor on foot.

The emperor was clad in the imperial cope, all of cloth of gold, over which fell the grand cordon of the Golden Fleece. He had the crown on his head; but the sceptre, which his hand had no longer the strength to bear, was carried before him on a cushion of red velvet.

The persons who were to occupy the benches placed on both sides of the armchairs and in front of the platform, had been introduced previously into the hall.

There were, on the right of the armchairs, the knights of the Golden Fleece, seated on a tapestried bench.

On the bench on the left, also tapestried, were the princes, the grandees of Spain, and the lords.

Behind them, on other benches not tapestried, were the three councils, — the council of state, the privy council, and the council of finance.

Finally, on other benches placed in front, were, first, the states of Brabant, then the states of Flanders, then the other states according to their rank.

The galleries around the hall had been packed with spectators since morning.

The emperor entered at a quarter past four; he was leaning on the shoulder of William of Orange, surnamed later on *The Taciturn*.

Beside William of Orange walked Emmanuel Philibert, accompanied by his squire and page.

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On the other side, in front of kings and princes, some steps to the right of the emperor, appeared a man of from thirty to thirty-five years, unknown to every one, and who seemed as much astonished at finding himself there as the spectators seemed to be at his presence on the occasion.

It was Odoardo Maraviglia, drawn from his prison, clad in a magnificent garb, and led here without knowing where he was going or what was wanted with him.

On the appearance of the emperor and his august suite, every one rose.

The emperor advanced to the front of the platform, walking with great difficulty, supported though he was. It was evident that great courage, and especially great habitual endurance, were needed to prevent him from uttering a groan at every step he took.

He sat down, having King Philip on his right and Queen Mary on his left.

Then on a sign from him, each did the same, except on the one side, the Prince of Orange, Emmanuel Philibert, and the two persons forming his suite, and on the other, Odoardo Maravigalia, who, free, and dressed, as we have said, in a magnificent costume, was looking at the spectacle with astonished eyes.

When everybody was seated, the emperor made a sign to Councillor Philibert Brussellius to open the proceedings.

Every one was in a state of anxious expectation. The countenance of Philip alone remained calm and impassive. His eye seemed to see nothing; it could be hardly guessed if the blood circulated under that pale and inanimate skin. The orator explained in a few words that the kings, princes, grandees of Spain, knights of the Golden Fleece, and the members of the states of Flanders present in the hall, had been convoked to assist at the abdication of the Emperor Charles V. in favour of his son Don Philip, who, starting from this moment, succeeded him in his titles of King of Castile, Leon, Grenada, Navarre, Aragon, Naples, Sicily, Majorca, the isles, Indias, and lands of the

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Pacific and Atlantic oceans, and in those of Archduke of Austria, Duke of Burgundy, Lothier, Brabant, Luisbourg, Luxembourg, and Quelières; of Count of Flanders, Artois, and Burgundy; of Palatine of Hainault, Zeland, Holland, Feurette, Haguenau, Namur, and Zutphen; in fine, of those of Prince of Zuane, Marquis of the Holy Empire, Lord of Frise, Salmi, Malines, and of the cities and countries of Utrecht, Overyssel, and Groeningen.

The imperial crown was reserved for Ferdinand, already King of the Romans.

At this reservation, a livid pallor overspread the face of Don Philip, and a slight trembling sent a shiver through the muscles of his cheeks.

This abdication, at which all held their breath in astonishment, was attributed by the orator to the emperor's desire to revisit Spain, which he had not seen since twelve years, and particularly to the sufferings he experienced from the gout, — sufferings increased by the rigorous climate of Flanders and Germany. He finished by praying, in the name of the emperor, the states of Flanders to take in good part this cession which he made of them to his son Don Philip.

After concluding the discourse with a peroration in which he called upon God to have the august emperor always under his safeguard and protection, Philibert Brussellius was silent, and resumed his seat.

Then the emperor rose in his turn; he was pale, and the perspiration of suffering bedewed his countenance. He wished to speak, and held in his hand a paper on which he had written his discourse, in case his memory failed him.

At the first sign shown by him of his intention to speak, the confused murmurs which had run through the hall at the close of the discourse of Councillor Brussellius ceased as if by enchantment; and weak as the emperor's voice was, the moment he opened his mouth, a single word of what he said was not lost. It is true that as he progressed

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in his speech, and as he recalled his toils, his dangers, his great deeds, and his plans, his voice rose, his gestures had a larger sweep, his eyes became singularly animated, and his accent had some of those solemn intonations often heard in the last words of the dying.

"Dear friends," he said,[1] "you have just heard the motives which have led me to decide on resigning the sceptre and the crown into the hands of my son. Let me add some words which will make clearer to your eyes my resolution and my thought. Dear friends, several of those who are listening to me to-day must remember that it is just forty years ago on the 5th of January last, since my grandfather, the Emperor Maximilian, of glorious memory, released me from his guardianship, and in this very hall, at this very hour, when I reckoned hardly fifteen years, made me master of all my rights. In the following year, King Ferdinand the Catholic, my maternal grandfather, being dead, I was crowned, being then only sixteen years old.

"My mother was alive; but, though living and though still young, her mind, as you know, was so much affected by the death of her husband that she did not feel in a condition to rule by herself the kingdoms of her father and mother, and it became necessary for me, at seventeen years, to begin my journeys across the seas by setting out in order to take possession of the kingdom of Spain. Finally, when my grandfather, the Emperor Maximilian, died, thirty-six years ago, — I was nineteen then, — I ventured to become a candidate for the imperial crown he had worn, not from the desire of ruling over a larger number of countries, but in order to watch more efficaciously over the safety of Germany, of my other realms, and particularly of my beloved Flanders.

[1] We have made no alteration in the discourse of the emperor, which we borrow from a work published in 1830 at Brussels, by the learned conservator of the archives of the kingdom, M. L. P. Gachard.

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"It was with this object I undertook and accomplished so many journeys; count them, and you will be yourselves astonished at their number and extent.

"I have passed nine times into upper Germany, six times into Spain, seven times into Italy, ten times into Belgium, four times into France, twice into England, and twice into Africa, which makes in all forty voyages or expeditions. Besides these forty voyages or expeditions, I have made journeys to visit islands and provinces brought under my sway.

"For the latter purpose, I have traversed the Mediterranean eight times and the Western Sea three times, which I am making ready to cross to-day for the last time.

"I pass under silence my journey through France, which I made from Spain to the Low Countries, — a journey rendered necessary, as you know, by grave motives.[1]

"I have been forced, on account of these numerous and long absences, to place at the head of the government of these provinces, madame, my good sister, the queen here present. Now, I know, and the different orders of the state know as well as I, how she has acquitted herself of these functions.

"I have, at the same time I made these journeys, carried on many wars; all these enterprises have been undertaken or accepted against my will; and what afflicts me to-day on bidding you farewell, my dear friends, is not to be able to leave you a peace more stable, an assurance of more certain tranquillity. . . . All these things have not been done, as you may well think, without protracted toils and great fatigue; and the heaviness of that fatigue, the burden of those toils, can be measured by seeing my paleness and my feebleness. Consequently, let no one believe me so ignorant of myself as not, when comparing the responsibilities thrust upon me by events with the strength granted me by God, to have comprehended my insufficiency for the mission given me.

[1] The revolt of the people of Ghent.

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"But it seems to me that, on account of the mental state of my mother and the tender age of my son, it would have been a crime to lay down the burden before the proper hour, however heavy it might be, which Providence, in giving me the crown and sceptre, had imposed on my head and on my arm.

"However, when I last quitted Flanders to go into Germany, I had already the project of accomplishing the purpose which I execute to-day; but, seeing the miserable condition of affairs, feeling that I had still a remnant of strength, moved by the disturbances which agitated the Christian republic, attacked at the same time by the Lutherans and the Turks, I believed it my duty to put off the time for repose, and to sacrifice to my subjects whatever remained to me of strength and existence. I was nearly attaining my aim, however, when the German princes and the King of France, in violation of their pledged word, flung me back into the midst of troubles and battles. The former attacked my person, and almost succeeded in making me a prisoner in Innspruck; the latter took possession of Metz, which belonged to the domain of the Empire. I hastened to besiege it myself with a numerous army. I was conquered and my army destroyed; but it was not by men, it was by the elements. To counterbalance the loss of Metz, I wrested Thérouanne and Hesdin from the French. I did more: I met the King of France at Valenciennes, and forced him to withdraw, doing all I could at the battle of Renty, in despair of not being able to do more.

"But to-day, besides the insufficiency which I have recognised in myself, the disease with which I am afflicted is become more acute, and prostrates me.

"Happily, at the very moment God takes from me a mother, he gives me a son of an age to govern. Now that my strength fails me and that death is approaching, I do not care to prefer the love and passion for sovereignty to the good and to the repose of my subjects. Instead of an

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Portrait of Charles V.

Photo-Etching. — From Painting by Garavaglia.

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infirm old man who has already seen descend into the tomb the best part of himself, I give you a vigorous prince, who must be acceptable to you on account of his flourishing youth and virtue. Swear then to him that fidelity and affection which you have sworn to me, and which you have so loyally kept. Take care especially that the heresies which are gliding in amongst you do not disturb the fraternity that ought to unite you; and if you see them putting forth any roots, hasten to extirpate them, to tear them out of the soil, and cast them afar.

"And now, to say a last word about myself, to all I have already spoken, I will add that I have fallen into many faults, whether through ignorance in my youth, or pride in my maturity, or through other weaknesses inherent in human nature. Nevertheless, I declare here that I have not done knowingly or voluntarily injury or violence to any one whatever, or that when violence or injury has been done, and I have learned of it, I have always made reparation, as, in the face of all, I am going to do now with regard to one of the persons here present, whom I beg to receive that reparation with patience and mercy."

Then, turning to Philip, who at the close of the discourse had thrown himself at his feet, —

"My son," said he, "if merely by my death you had entered into the possession of so many realms and provinces, I should still merit something from you for having left you a heritage so rich and so largely augmented by my labours. But since this great succession does not come to you to-day by my death, but only by my will; since your father has desired to die before his body descended to the tomb, to enable you to enjoy during his life the benefit of his succession, — I ask you, and I have the right to ask you, to bestow on the welfare of your subjects all that which you rightly seem to owe to me for having enabled you to enjoy the satisfaction of ruling before your time.

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"Other kings rejoice at the thought of giving life to their children and bequeathing to them kingdoms; but I have wished to wrest from death the glory of making you this present, believing that I receive a twofold joy in seeing you both live and reign through me. Few will be found to imitate my example, as, indeed, I have found few such examples in past ages that it would be well to imitate; but at least mine will be praised when it is seen that you deserve the experiment should be made in your case; and you will obtain this advantage, my son, if you preserve that wisdom which has distinguished you up to now; if you have continually in your soul the fear of the Sovereign Master of all things; if you undertake the defence of the Catholic religion and the protection of justice and the laws, which are the greatest strength and the best supports of empires. In fine, it remains to me now to wish in your favour such good fortune in your children that you may transfer to them your empire and your power freely, and without being thereto constrained otherwise than I am."

On saying these words, whether that they were in reality the end of the discourse, or that the discourse was interrupted by emotion, the voice of Charles V. stuck in his throat; and, laying his hand on the head of his kneeling son, he remained for an instant motionless and dumb, the tears in his eyes coursing abundantly and silently down his cheeks.

Then after a minute of this silence, more eloquent still than the discourse he had just pronounced, as if his strength was failing him, he stretched his hand to his sister; while Don Philip, rising from his knees, passed his arm around his body to support him.

Thereupon, Queen Mary drew from her pocket a crystal flagon containing a rose-coloured liquid, and poured the contents into a little golden cup which she presented to the emperor.

While the emperor was drinking, all in the assembly

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gave free course to their emotion. There were few hearts among those present, whether their rank brought them near to the throne or kept them far from it, that were not touched, few eyes that were not obscured by tears.

And indeed it was a great spectacle given to the world, that of this sovereign, warrior, and Cæsar, who, after forty years of such power as few men had ever received from Providence, descended voluntarily from the throne, and, weary in body and crushed in spirit, proclaimed with a loud voice the nothingness of human greatness in presence of the successor to whom he abandoned it.

But a spectacle greater still was to come, — the one just promised by the emperor, — it was that of a man publicly acknowledging a fault committed, and asking pardon of him to whom the wrong had been done.

The emperor understood that this was expected of him; and, mustering all his strength, he gently pushed his son away from him.

It was seen that he was going to speak a second time, and there was silence.

"Dear friends," resumed the emperor, "I promised just now a public reparation to a man I had offended. Be ye all witnesses, therefore, that after boasting of what I have done well, I have accused myself of what I have done ill."

Then, turning to the unknown man in the magnificent costume, whom every one had already remarked, —

"Odoardo Maraviglia," he said in a firm voice, "approach."

The young man to whom this formal invitation was addressed grew pale, and, tottering, approached Charles V.

"Count," said the emperor, "I have done you serious wrong, whether voluntarily or involuntarily, in the person of your father, who suffered a cruel death in the prisons of Milan. Often has this act been presented to me veiled by uncertainty. To-day it appears to me like a spectre clad in the winding-sheet of remorse. Comte Maraviglia, here, in the face of, beneath the eyes of, men and of God, at the moment when about to lay aside the

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imperial mantle, which for thirty-six years has weighed upon my shoulders, I humble myself before you, and pray you not only to grant me my pardon, but further to ask it for me of the Lord, who will perhaps sooner grant it to the petitions of the victim than to the supplications of the murderer."

Odoardo Maraviglia uttered a cry and fell on his knees.

"Magnificent emperor," he said, "it is not without reason that the world has given you the name of august. Oh, yes, yes! I pardon you in the name of my father and in my own name! Yes; God will pardon you. But from whom shall I seek that pardon, august emperor, which I no longer grant myself?"

Then, rising, "Gentlemen," said Maraviglia, turning towards the assembly, — "gentlemen, you behold in me a man who tried to assassinate the emperor, and whom the emperor has not only pardoned, but of whom he has asked pardon."

"King Don Philip," he added, bending before him who from that moment was to be called Philip II., "the murderer places himself in your hands."

"My son," said Charles V., whose strength was failing him for the second time, "I recommend to you this man; let his life be sacred to you!"

And he fell back almost fainting on his armchair.

"Ah, my dear Emmanuel!" said the page of the Duke of Savoy, who managed to reach the prince on account of the commotion occasioned by the emperor's faintness, "how good you are! how great! how I recognise you in what has passed!"

And before Emmanuel Philibert could prevent it, Leone-Leona had kissed his hands almost with as much respect as love.

The ceremony, a moment interrupted by the unforeseen accident we have related, which was not the least affecting of the scenes of that solemn day, was about to resume its course; for, in order that the abdication might be com-

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plete, after Charles V. had given, it was necessary that Philip should accept.

Philip, who had made a sign of assent to the recommendation of the emperor, again bowed humbly before him, and in Spanish — a language which many of the audience did not speak, but which almost all understood — he said in a voice marked for the first time perhaps by a shade of emotion: —

"I have not deserved, most invincible emperor and my very good father, I could never have believed that I should deserve, a paternal love so great that there assuredly has never been anything like it in the world, never at least, one that has produced such effects that it at once covers me with confusion, when I view the little merit which I have, and fills me with gratitude and respect in presence of your greatness. But since it has pleased you to treat me so tenderly and generously as a consequence of your august goodness, exercise the same goodness, my very dear father, by continuing in the belief that every effort shall be made on my part to have your decision in my favour universally approved and accepted, as I intend governing in such a manner as to convince the states of the affection I have always entertained for them."

At the conclusion of these words, he kissed the hand of his father several times; while the latter, pressing him to his breast, said, —

"I wish you, my son, the most precious blessings of Heaven and its divine aid."

Then Don Philip kissed the hand of his father for the last time, wiped a tear from his eyes which probably was not there, rose, turned towards the states, saluted them, and, with his hat in his hand, — the same attitude in which all were except the emperor, who was covered and seated, — he pronounced in French the following words: —

"Gentlemen, I would that I could speak better the language of this country, in order that you might the better understand the good affection and favour I bear you. But

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as I do not know it as well as would be necessary for my purpose, I will ask the Bishop of Arras to act in my name."

At the same time, Antoine Perrenot de Grandville, who was afterward cardinal, took his stand as interpreter of the sentiments of the prince. He eulogised the zeal of Don Philip for the good of his subjects, and expressed the resolution he had adopted of conforming exactly to the good and wise instructions the emperor had given him.

Then Queen Mary, the emperor's sister, governess for twenty-six years of the provinces of the Low Countries, rose in turn, and in a few words resigned into the hands of her nephew the regency which she had received from her brother.

After this, Philip swore to maintain the rights and privileges of his subjects, and all the members of the assembly, princes, grandees of Spain, knights of the Golden Fleece, deputies of the states either in their own name or in the name of those they represented, swore obedience to him.

This double oath pronounced, Charles V. rose, placed Don Philip on his throne, put the crown on his head, and said in a loud voice, —

"Grant, O Lord, that this crown be not for your elect a crown of thorns!"

Then he made a step towards the door.

Immediately Don Philip, the Prince of Orange, Emmanuel Philibert, and all the princes and lords rushed forward to support the emperor; but he made a sign to Maraviglia, who approached, hesitating, for he could not comprehend what the emperor wanted with him.

The emperor wished to have no other support in retiring than that afforded by Maraviglia, for whose father's death he was responsible, and who, in retaliation for the bloody deed, had tried to slay him.

But, as the second arm of the emperor fell inert by his side, —

"Sire," said Emmanuel Philibert, "allow my page Leone

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to be the second support on which your Majesty may lean; and the honour you do him, I shall consider done to myself."

And he pushed Leone towards the emperor.

Charles V. looked at the page and recognised him.

"Ah, ah!" he said raising his arm, in order that the latter might present his shoulder, "it is the young man of the diamond. You want to be reconciled to me, then, fair page?"

Then, looking at his hand, on the little finger of which only he had, on account of his cruel sufferings, been able to wear a gold ring, —

"You lost something by waiting, fair page," he continued; "instead of the diamond, you will have only this simple ring. It is true it has my seal on it, which perhaps may be a compensation."

And drawing it from his little finger, he put it on the thumb of Leone, the thumb of that delicate hand being the only finger large enough to hold it.

Then he left the hall under the eyes and amid the acclamations of the assembly, — eyes that would have been still more curious, acclamations that would have been still more enthusiastic, if the spectators had been able to guess that this monarch who was descending from a throne, that this Christian who was marching towards solitude, that this sinner who was bent under the weight of pardon, was advancing to a tomb in the near future, leaning not only on the son, but on the daughter of that unhappy Francesco Maraviglia, who was done to death by his orders, one gloomy night in September, in a dungeon of the fortress of Milan.

It was repentance sustained by prayer; that is to say, if we are to believe the words of Jesus Christ, the most agreeable spectacle here below to the eyes of the Lord.

But, on reaching the gate of the solitary street where his mule awaited him, the emperor decided that neither of these young people should take a step further, and he

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dismissed Odoardo to his new lord, Don Philip, and Leone to his old master, Emmanuel Philibert.

Then without other guard or suite than the groom who held the bridle of his peaceful steed, he took his way to his little house in the park; so that none who saw him riding along in the darkness even guessed that this humble pilgrim was the same man whose abdication was at that very hour the sole talk of Brussels, and soon to be the talk of the whole world.

Charles V., on arriving at the gate of this little house, on whose site the palace of the House of Representatives stands to-day, found it open.

The groom, therefore, had only to push one of the wings aside to admit the rider, the mule, and himself.

Then, having on the order of the emperor brought the mule as close as possible to the door of the house, in order that the passage to the parlour might be as short as possible, he received his master in his arms, and placed him on the threshold.

The door was open, as the gate had been.

The emperor paid no attention to this circumstance, plunged as he was in reflections which it is more easy for our readers to imagine than for us to relate.

Supported on one side by his staff, which he found in the same place he had left it, behind the door, on the other by his servant, he gained the parlour, which was hung with thick warm tapestry, furnished with thick carpets, and had a blazing fire in the immense chimney.

The parlour was lit only by the glare of the flame, which was coiling greedily around the brands while devouring them.

He stretched himself on a sofa; and, having dismissed the groom, he recalled each of the phases of that life crowded with the events of a whole half-century; and what a half-century! — that in which lived Henry VIII., Maximilian, Clement VII., François I., Soliman, and Luther. He forced his memory to recross the road he had travelled,

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sailing up the stream of his years, like a traveller who, towards the close of his life, would sail up the river with flowery and perfumed banks which he descended in his youth.

The journey was immense, magnificent, marvellous; it was made through the adoration of courtiers, the acclamations of the world, and the genuflections of the multitudes who ran to greet this gigantic fortune on its passage.

Suddenly, in the midst of this dream, which was less that of a man than of a god, one of the brands on the hearth burst, and one fragment fell in the ashes, while the other rolled on the carpet, from which a thick smoke immediately began to rise.

This incident, commonplace though it was, and perhaps for that very reason, brought the emperor back to reality.

"Ho!" he called, "ho! who is on service here? Some one come quick!"

There was no answer.

"Is there nobody in the ante-chambers?" cried the ex-emperor, growing impatient and striking the floor with his stick.

This second call met with no more reply than the first.

"Let some one come, I say, and fix this fire, and let him make haste!" said Charles V., now more impatient than ever.

Same silence.

"Oh!" said he, dragging himself from one piece of furniture to another, in order to reach the chimney, "if Providence had wished to inspire me with repentance for what I have done, the lesson has come very soon."

And then he himself, after many painful efforts, succeeded in regulating the fire with his own hands which could scarcely hold the tongs from pain.

All, from princes to valets, were busy around the new king, Don Philip.

The emperor kicked back the last cinders smoking on the carpet, when a step was heard in the ante-chamber, and a

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human form appeared framed by the door and outlined in the shadow.

"At last!" murmured the emperor.

"Sire," said the new-comer, who saw that Charles V. was mistaken as to his identity, "I ask pardon of your Majesty for thus presenting myself before you; but, having found all the doors open, and seeing nobody in the ante-chambers to announce me, I have ventured to announce myself."

"Announce yourself, then, sir," replied Charles, who was quickly learning, as we see, his apprenticeship as a private individual. "Come, who are you?"

"Sire," replied the unknown, in the most respectful tone, and bowing to the very ground, "I am Gaspard de Châtillon, Sire of Coligny, Admiral of France, and envoy extraordinary from his Majesty King Henri II."

"Monsieur envoy extraordinary of his Majesty King Henri II.," said Charles, smiling with a certain bitterness, "you have mistaken the door; it is no longer with me that you have business, it is with King Philip II., my successor to the throne of Naples since nine months, and to the throne of Spain and the Indias since twenty minutes."

"Sire," said Coligny, in the same respectful tone and bowing a second time, "whatever change may have occurred in the fortunes of Don Philip since nine months or since twenty minutes, you are always for me the elect of Germany, the very great, very holy, and very august Emperor Charles V.; and as it is to your Majesty that the letter of my sovereign is addressed, permit me to place it in your Majesty's hands."

"In that case, monsieur, help me to light these tapers," said Charles V., "for the accession of my son Don Philip has taken away from me even my last lackey."

And the emperor, aided by the admiral, lit the tapers in the candelabra, in order to be able to read the letter addressed to him by Henri II., and perhaps also, moved by some curiosity to see the man who for three years had been such a doughty adversary of his.

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Gaspard de Châtillon, Sire of Coligny, was at the period we have reached a man of thirty-eight or thirty-nine years, with piercing eyes, a martial presence, and a tall and well-built figure. Being of a loyal and intrepid heart, he was held in great esteem by François I. and Henri II., as he was also to be by François II.

Immense as was the massacre of the 24th of August, 1572, there was needed, to render the miserable assassination of such a man possible, the hereditary hatred of Henri, Duc de Guise, joined to the hypocrisy of Catherine de Médicis and the weakness of Charles IX.

This hatred, which was beginning to separate the illustrious admiral from his old friend François de Guise at the very time we are introducing him to the reader, had its birth on the battle-field of Renty. In their youth, these two great captains, whose genius united would have wrought such marvels, had been intimate friends; there were no labours, no pleasures, no exercises which they did not share. In their studies of antiquity, they proposed as models for themselves not only the men who have left fine examples of courage, but also those who have left fine examples of fraternity.

This mutual affection went so far that "they wore," says Brantôme, "the same ornaments and the same livery." When King Henri II. sent a messenger to Charles V., and this messenger was not the Connétable de Montmorency, it could only be the Amiral de Coligny or the Duc de Guise.

The emperor regarded the admiral with a certain admiration. It was impossible, we are assured by contemporary historians, to see any man who gave one a better idea of a great captain.

But, at this very same moment, it occurred to Charles that Coligny had been sent to Brussels, not precisely to give him the letter he held in his hand, but rather to report to the court of France what had taken place in the palace of Brussels on that famous day of the 25th of

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October, 1555. So the first question the emperor put to Coligny, when a long gaze at the countenance of Coligny had allowed him to satisfy his curiosity, was the following: —

"When did you arrive, M. l'Amiral?"

"This morning, sire," replied Coligny.

"And you bring me — "

"This letter from his Majesty King Henri II."

And he presented the letter to the emperor.

The emperor took it, and made some vain attempts to break the seal, to such a degree were his hands tortured and twisted by the gout.

Then the admiral offered to render him this service.

Charles V. handed him the letter, laughing.

"Am I not, in truth, M. l'Amiral," he said, "a nice cavalier for running and breaking a lance, — I who can no longer even break a seal?"

The admiral returned the letter opened to Charles V.

"No, no," said the emperor, "read it yourself; my sight is as bad as my hand. I think, then, you will acknowledge that I have done well to resign everything, force and power, into the hands of one younger and more adroit."

The emperor emphasised the last word.

The admiral did not answer, but began reading the letter.

During the reading, Charles V., who pretended to see no longer, was devouring Coligny with his eagle glance.

The message was quite simple, — a letter announcing to the emperor the final completion of the truce; the preliminaries had been arranged five or six months before.

The letter read, Coligny took from his jerkin the parchments signed by the plenipotentiaries, and sealed with the royal seal of France.

It was the exchange made for the corresponding papers sent previously by Charles V. to Henri II., signed by the Spanish, German, and English plenipotentiaries, and sealed with the seal of the Empire.

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The emperor cast his eyes over these political contracts; and as if he divined that a year would hardly pass before they were broken, he threw them on a large table covered with a black cloth, and took the admiral's arm to help him to his seat.

"M. l'Amiral," said he, "is it not a miracle of Providence that I, weak and retired from the world, should to-day be supported by an arm that was once very nearly overturning me at the height of my power."

"Oh, sire!" replied the admiral, "only one man could have overturned Charles V., and that was Charles V. himself; and if it has been the lot of us poor pigmies to struggle against a giant, it was because God wished in a surpassing manner to prove to the world our weakness and your power."

Charles V. smiled. It was evident the compliment did not displease him coming from a man like the admiral.

However, sitting down and making a sign to Coligny to be seated also, —

"Enough," he said, "enough, admiral. I am no longer emperor, I am no longer king, I am no longer prince; I must have nothing to do now with flattery. Let us change the conversation. How is my brother Henri?"

"Wonderfully well, sire," replied Coligny, obeying the invitation to be seated when repeated for the third time.

"Ah, how glad I am of that!" said Charles; "so glad that my heart dances with joy, and not without cause, for I hold it great honour to have sprung, on the maternal side, from that lily that bears and supports the most celebrated crown in the world. But," he continued, affecting to lead back the conversation to the commonplaces of life, "I have been sometimes told nevertheless that this well-beloved brother of mine was getting gray; and yet it seems to me not three days ago since he was in Spain, a youngster without a hair on his face. Ah, twenty years, however, have slipped by since then!"

And Charles V. heaved a sigh, as the mere fact of these

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words escaping his lips opened up the vast horizon of the past.

"It is true, sire," returned Coligny, in reply to the question of the emperor, "that his Majesty King Henri is beginning to count gray hairs, but by twos and threes at the most. Now, are not many people, younger than he is, grayheaded?"

"Oh, what you say is quite true!" replied the emperor. "And now, as I have questioned you on the gray hairs of my brother Henri, I must tell you the history of my own. I was almost the same age, thirty-six or thirty-seven scarcely; it was on my return from Goulette and arrival in Naples. You know the beauty of that admirable city of Naples, M. l'Amiral, and the beauty and grace of the dames who dwell there."

Coligny bowed smiling.

"I am a man," continued Charles; "I wished to merit their favour like others. So, on the day of my arrival, I summoned my barber to curl and perfume me. This man presented me a glass, that I might follow the operations as he went along. It was long since I had looked at myself; I had been too busy making war on the Turks, the allies of my good brother François I. Suddenly I cried out, 'I say, barber, what is that, my friend?' 'Sire,' he answered, 'it is two or three white hairs.' Now, I must tell you the flatterer lied; it was not two or three, but, on the contrary, a dozen. 'Quick! quick! master barber,' I jerked out, 'pull them out; don't leave a single one.' He did so; but do you know what happened? Some time after, on looking in the glass again, I found that for every one he had plucked out, ten had returned. So that if I had plucked these out too, in less than a year, I should have been as white as a swan. Tell my brother Henri, M. l'Amiral, to guard his three white hairs preciously, and not allow them to be plucked out, even by the fair hands of Madame de Valentinois."

"I will not fail, sire," replied Coligny, laughing.

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"And talking of Madame de Valentinois," continued Charles, showing by the transition that he was not a stranger to the scandals of the court of Henri II., "what news have you, M. l'Amiral, of your dear uncle, the great constable?"

"Excellent," replied the admiral, "although his head is quite white."

"Yes," said Charles, "his head is white; but he is like the leeks, with a white head and the rest of the body green. And except this was the case, he would not be such a favourite as he is with the great ladies of the court. But, ah, by the way, — for I do not like letting you go without having news of everybody, — how is the daughter of our old friend François I.?"

And Charles emphasised with a smile these three words *our old friend.*

"Does your Majesty mean Madame Marguerite of France?"

"She is still called the fourth Grace, the tenth Muse, is she not?"

"Always, sire; and she deserves the title more and more every day, by the protection she grants to our great geniuses, such as MM. de l'Hôpital, Ronsard, and Dorat."

"Eh!" said Charles V., "it looks as if our brother Henri II. was jealous of his royal neighbours, and was determined to keep this beautiful pearl for himself alone: I hear nothing said of the marriage of Madame Marguerite, and she must be" (Charles appeared to be making a calculation) "very nearly thirty-two."

"Yes, sire, but she hardly looks twenty; she is fresher and lovelier every day!"

"It is the privilege of roses to bud and bloom anew every spring," returned Charles. "But, speaking of buds and roses, tell me, my dear Coligny, tell me how our young Queen of Scotland is getting along at the court of France? Could I not help you in arranging matters with my daughter-in-law of England?"

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"Oh, sire, there is no hurry," replied Coligny; "and your Majesty, who knows so well the age of our princesses, must be aware that the Queen of Scotland is hardly thirteen years old. Now she is, — I do not think I am revealing a secret in confiding this to your Majesty, — she is to wed the Dauphin François, and the marriage cannot take place for a year or two."

"Stay a moment; stay a moment, my dear admiral. I am trying to recall something," said Charles V. "I think there is somewhere in my memory a reminiscence which may serve as a warning to my brother Henri II., although it is based merely on cabalistic science. Ah! I have it. But first, can you tell me what has become of a young lord named Gabriel de Lorges, Comte de Montgomery?"

"Certainly: he is at the court of the king, with whom he is a great favourite, and is a captain in the Scotch Guard."

"A great favourite! indeed!" said Charles, pensively.

"Have you anything to say against this young lord?" asked Coligny, respectfully.

"No. But I have a story to tell you; listen."

"I am listening, sire."

"When I was crossing France, with the permission of my brother François I., in order to chastise the revolt of my well-beloved fellow-countrymen and subjects of Ghent, the King of France paid me, — as you may remember, although your beard had hardly sprouted at the time, — the King of France paid me all kinds of honour. He sent the dauphin with a multitude of young lords and pages to meet me at Fontainebleau. It is as well to tell you, my dear admiral, that I had no fancy for a journey through France, and, but for stern necessity, would have preferred another route. Everything had been done to make me distrust the loyalty of King François I., and I do not mind confessing that I myself sometimes was afraid (very groundlessly, as the event proved) that my brother of France might take advantage of the occasion and retaliate for the treaty of Madrid. I had brought with me, then (just as

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if human science could outweigh the purposes of God), a very able man, a renowned astrologer, who, by the inspection of the faces of people, judged at once whether a man venturing among such people was in danger of his life or liberty."

The admiral smiled.

"Wait, and you shall see. We were then on the road from Orléans to Fontainebleau, when suddenly we saw a great *cortège* approach us. It was, as I told you, the Dauphin of France with a crowd of lords and pages. At first, in the distance, seeing only the dust which enveloped the horses, we believed it was a troop of men-at-arms, and we halted. But soon, through the gray cloud formed by this dust, we saw satin and velvet shining, and gold sparkling. Evidently this troop, so far from being hostile, was an escort of honour. We proceeded, therefore, on our way, full of confidence in the word of King François I. The cavalcades soon met, and the dauphin, advancing, complimented me in the name of his father. The compliment was so gracious and so calculated to set at rest — oh! not my suspicions. God, to whom I am about to consecrate my life, is my witness that never for a moment did I suspect my good brother! — the compliment, I repeat, was so gracious that I wished to embrace the young prince on the spot. Now, while I was holding him in my arms, for, I believe, a good minute, the two troops mingled together; and the young lords and pages in the suite of the dauphin, curious to observe me, doubtless because of some little noise that I have made in the world, clustered around me, approaching as near as they could. Then I noticed that my astrologer, an Italian from Milan, named Angelo Policastro, had made his way through them on horseback, and taken a position on my left. This seemed to me audacious, — the notion of such a man mingling with such a fine and rich nobility."

"'Oh, Signor Angelo,' I said, 'what are you doing there?'

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"'Sire,' he replied, 'I am in my place.'

"'No matter! keep a little farther back, Signor Angelo.'

"'I cannot, I must not, my august lord,' he answered.

"Thereupon I suspected something had occurred likely to disturb the harmony of my journey; so, fearing he might obey my first injunction, —

"'Remain, then, Signor Angelo,' I said; 'remain, since you are here with a good intention. Only when we enter the castle, you will tell me why you have taken up such a position, will you not?'

"'Oh, sire, I shall not fail, the thing being my duty; but turn your head to the left, and observe that blond young man who is near me, and who wears the hair long.'

"I looked from the corner of my eye; the young man was the more remarkable, and it was the easier singling him out that he looked like a foreigner, an Englishman, and was the only one who wore his hair long.

"'Well, I see him,' I answered.

"'That is enough,' said the astrologer, — 'for the moment, at least; later on I shall speak to your Majesty.'

"In truth, I had hardly entered the castle and withdrawn to my apartments to change my toilet, when Signor Angelo followed me.

"'Well,' I asked, 'what have you to tell me about this young man?'

"'Have you noticed, sire, the furrow this young man has between the eyebrows, although so young?'

"'No, faith,' I replied; 'not having examined him so nearly as you.'

"'Well, that furrow is what we men of the cabala call the *line of death*. Sire, that young man will kill a king!'

"'A king or an emperor?' I asked.

"'I cannot say, sire; but he will strike a head wearing a crown.'

"'Ah, ah! you have no means of knowing if this head will be mine?'

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"'Yes, sire; but for this I shall need a lock of his hair.'

"'Good! a lock of his hair, — how will you get it?'

"'I do not know, but I must have it.'

"I began to reflect. At this moment the gardener's daughter entered, carrying a basket of flowers which she came to arrange in the vases on the mantelpiece and in those on the consoles. When she had finished, I took her by the hand, and drew her towards me. Then, taking two new gold maximilians from my pocket, I gave them to her. She thanked me.

"'And now,' I said, kissing her on the forehead, 'would you like to earn ten times as many?'

She cast down her eyes and blushed.

"'Oh!' said I to her, 'it is not that — there is no question of that —'

"'Of what, then, lord emperor?' she asked.

"'Come here,' I said, leading her to the window, and pointing to the blond young man, who was amusing himself running the quintaine in the court; 'you see that young lord?'

"'Yes, I see him.'

"'What do you think of him?'

"'He is very handsome, and splendidly dressed.'

"'Well, bring me a lock of his hair to-morrow morning, and, instead of two gold maximilians, you shall have twenty!'

"'But how can I get the hair of this young man?' she asked, regarding me naïvely.

"'Oh! upon my word, my fair girl, I have nothing to do with that; it is for you to find the way. All that I can do is to give you a Bible.'

"'A Bible?'

"'Yes; that you may see what means Delilah adopted to cut the hair of Samson.'

"The young girl blushed again, but it seemed as if the information was sufficient; for she went away at once, pensive and smiling, and the next day she returned, with

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a lock of hair gleaming like gold. Ah! the most simple woman is more cunning than the craftiest of us all, M. l'Amiral!"

"Does your Majesty not intend finishing the story?"

"Oh, certainly. I sent the lock of hair to Signor Angelo, who made his cabalistic experiments on it, and said it was not I, but a prince bearing the *fleur-de-lis* in his coat of arms, whom the horoscope threatened. Well, my dear Coligny, the blond young man with the line of death between the eyebrows, the Seigneur de Lorges, Comte de Montgomery, captain in the Scotch Guard of my brother Henri —"

"What! Your Majesty suspects — ?"

"Oh," said Charles, rising to indicate that the audience was over, "I suspect nothing, God forbid! I only repeat to you, word for word, as a thing that might be useful to my brother Henri, the horoscope of Signor Angelo Policastro; and I advise his Majesty to pay good attention to this line that happens to be between the two eyebrows of his captain of the Scotch Guard, which is called the line of death, reminding him that it specially threatens a prince bearing the *fleur-de-lis* in his coat of arms."

"Sire," said Coligny, "his Majesty shall be informed of the friendly warning you have given him."

"And that you may not forget it, my dear Coligny, accept this," said Charles, throwing round the neck of the ambassador the magnificent gold chain he was himself wearing, from which hung that diamond star called the *star of the west*, in honour of the western possessions of the kings of Spain.

Coligny wished to receive the gift on his knees; but Charles would not allow this mark of respect, and, holding him in his arms, he kissed him on both cheeks.

At the door Coligny encountered Emmanuel Philibert, who, as soon as the ceremony was over, or rather, a little before, left everything to offer his homage at the feet of that emperor who was now greater in his eyes than before he abdicated his greatness.

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The two captains saluted each other courteously; both had met on the field of battle, and their mutual esteem was on a level with their courage; that is to say, lofty and grand.

"Your Majesty," said Coligny, "has nothing else to say to me for the king my master?"

"No, nothing." Then, looking at Emmanuel Philibert, he smiled.

"Unless, my dear admiral, that, if our health permits us, we devote some attention to the task of finding a husband for Madame Marguerite of France."

Then, leaning on the arm of Emmanuel, —

"Come, my dear Emmanuel," he said, returning to the parlour, "it seems an age since I saw you!"

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XV.

AFTER THE ABDICATION.

For those of our readers who wish to see the issue of every occurrence and the philosophy of every event, we have decided to write the present chapter, which perhaps may interfere for a moment with the march of our action, but which will allow the eye, resting for a while on the Emperor Charles, to follow the fortunes of that illustrious sovereign, concealed, though they were, by the obscurity of his new life from the day of his abdication to that of his death; that is to say, from the 25th of October, 1555, to the 21st of September, 1558.

After the conqueror of François I. has been laid in the sepulchre, whither his rival has preceded him by nine years, we shall return to the living, to combats and festivals, to scenes in which love and hatred play their several parts; in fine, to all those immense and confused murmurs which cradle the dead, waiting in the depths of their tombs for the eternal resurrection.

The different political affairs which Charles V. had to regulate in the Low Countries, and the abdication of the Empire in favour of his brother Ferdinand, — an abdication which followed that of his hereditary states in favour of his son Don Philip, — still kept him nearly a year in Brussels; so that it was only in the first days of September, 1556, that he could quit that city and set out for Ghent, escorted by all the grandees, nobles, ambassadors, magistrates, captains, and officers in Belgium.

King Philip had expressly desired to conduct his father to the place of embarkation; that is to say, to Flessingen,

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which the emperor reached in his litter, accompanied by the two queens, his sisters, with their ladies, King Philip with his court, and Emmanuel Philibert with his two inseparable companions, Leone and Scianca-Ferro.

The adieux were long and sad: not only was a man who had held the world clasped in his two arms separating from his sisters, from his son, from a grateful and devoted nephew, but he was, moreover, separating from the world, from life almost, his intention being to retire into a monastery immediately on his arrival in Spain.

Consequently, the ex-emperor wished to have these adieux over on the eve of his departure, saying that if they were to take place on the morrow, at the moment he was going to embark, he would never have the courage to set his foot on board the vessel.

The first person Charles V. took leave of — because, perhaps, in his heart he loved him least — was Don Philip. After receiving his father's kiss, the King of Spain knelt and asked his blessing.

Charles V. gave it to him with that majesty which never deserted him under any circumstances, recommended him to keep peace with the Allied Powers, and particularly with France, if it were possible.

Don Philip promised his father to comply with his wishes, expressing a doubt, however, as to the possibility of peace with France, but asseverating that he would nevertheless keep, on his side, the truce faithfully, as long as his cousin Henri II. did not break it.

After this Charles embraced Emmanuel Philibert, holding him a long time in his arms, as if he could not bring himself to separate from him.

Finally, calling Don Philip with tears in his eyes and in his voice, he said: —

"My dear son, I have given you many things, — I have given you Naples, Flanders, the two Indias; for your sake, indeed, I have despoiled myself of all I possessed. But keep this well in your mind: neither Naples and its

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palaces, nor the Low Countries and their commerce, nor the two Indias and their mines of gold, silver, and precious stones are worth the treasure I give you in bequeathing to you your cousin Emmanuel Philibert, — a man equally prompt to plan and execute, a good statesman, and a great captain. I recommend you to treat him, therefore, not as a subject, but as a brother; and even then he will be scarcely treated by you according to his merits."

Emmanuel Philibert tried to kiss the knees of his uncle, but the latter held him in his arms; then, gently pushing him from his arms into those of Don Philip, —

"Go," he said; "go! it is a shame for men to groan and weep thus on account of a short separation in this world! Let us manage, by good deeds and the virtues of a Christian life, to make sure of our union in a happier world; that is the essential point!"

And, making a sign with his hand to the two young men to depart, he remained with his back turned until they were outside of the apartment, and then went to take leave of his sisters.

Don Philip and Emmanuel Philibert mounted their horses and started at once for Brussels.

As to the ex-emperor, he embarked the next day, 10th of September, 1556, on a vessel "truly royal in size and adornment," says Gregorio Leti, historian of Charles V.; but it was hardly outside the harbour when it was saluted by an English ship. This ship carried the Earl of Arundel, sent to her father-in-law by Queen Mary, to beg him not to pass so near the coasts of Great Britain without paying her a visit.

But at this invitation Charles merely shrugged his shoulders, and, in a tone not wholly free from bitterness, he said, —

"Eh! what pleasure could so great a queen take in seeing herself the daughter-in-law of a private gentleman?"

In spite of this reply, the Earl of Arundel persisted, with so many courteous supplications and respectful prayers

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that Charles V. could no longer defend himself from such importunity, and at last said, —

"My lord, everything will depend on the winds."

The two queens had embarked with their brother. Sixty ships escorted the imperial vessel; and, seeing that, although the winds were far from being unfavourable, the emperor passed Yarmouth, London, and Portsmouth without stopping, the Earl of Arundel insisted no further. He placed himself respectfully in the suite of the imperial vessel, and followed it into Loredo, a port of Biscay, where Charles was received by the Grand Constable of Castile.

But he had no sooner touched that land of Spain, over which he had so gloriously reigned, than he knelt down, before listening to a word of the discourse the grand constable had prepared; and, kissing the soil of that realm which had become now a kind of second birthplace, he said: —

"I salute thee with all reverence, O common mother! and, as I came forth from the womb of my mother to receive so many treasures, I wish now also to return naked into thy bosom, my very dear mother! And if it was then a duty of nature, it is to-day an effect of grace upon my will."

He had not finished this prayer, when the wind began to swell, and such a violent tempest arose that all the fleet which had accompanied him perished in the harbour, not excepting even the imperial vessel, which was laden with treasure and with the magnificent gifts brought by the emperor from Belgium and Germany as gifts to the churches of Spain, — which gave occasion to a saying by one of the personages of the suite of Charles V., that the vessel, foreseeing that never again would such glory ennoble it, had sunk into the sea in order to show at once its respect, regret, and sorrow.

It was just as well, perhaps, that inanimate things should give such proofs of respect, regret, and sorrow to Charles V., for men were very cold in presence of his

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changed fortunes. At Burgos, for example, the emperor crossed the city without any deputation meeting him, and without the citizens even giving themselves the trouble to run to their doors to look at him passing. Which seeing, the emperor shook his head, murmuring, —

"In truth, the inhabitants of Burgos must have been listening to me when I said at Loredo that I was returning naked into Spain!"

The same day, however, a noble lord named Don Bartolomeo Miranda having come to visit him, and having said to him, —

"It is to-day exactly a year, sire, since your Imperial Majesty abandoned the world to devote yourself entirely to the service of God," —

"Yes," said Charles; "and it is to-day exactly a year since I have repented of it!"

Charles V. recalled the sad and solitary evening of his abdication when the coals fell upon the carpet, and he had no one to help in regulating the fire but Admiral Coligny.

From Burgos the emperor travelled to Valladolid, which was then the capital of Spain. Half an hour from the city, he met a procession. It consisted of nobles and lords, led by his grandson Don Carlos, then eleven years old.

The child managed his steed admirably, and rode on the left of the emperor's litter. It was the first time he saw his grandfather, and the latter regarded him with an earnestness that would have disconcerted any one but the young prince. Don Carlos did not even lower his eyes, contenting himself with taking off his cap respectfully every time the emperor's eyes were fixed upon him. He replaced it on his head when Charles turned away his eyes.

As a consequence, the emperor no sooner entered his apartments than he sent for him, in order to have a nearer view of him, and to converse with him.

The boy presented himself, respectful in manner, but without any embarrassment.

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"And so it was you, my grandson, who came to meet me," said Charles.

"It was my duty," replied the boy, "as I am your subject in a twofold manner; for you are my grandfather and my emperor."

"Ah, indeed!" exclaimed Charles, astonished at finding so much coolness in a child of such tender years.

"Besides, even if it was not my duty to meet your Imperial Majesty, I should have done so through curiosity."

"And why so?"

"Because I have often heard that you were an illustrious emperor, and that you have done great things."

"Ah, truly!" said Charles V., who was amused by the strange disposition of the child; "and would you like me to relate those great things to you?"

"It would be a keen pleasure and an immense honour for me," replied the young prince.

"Well, sit down there."

"With the permission of your Majesty, I shall listen standing," said the child.

Then Charles V. related all his wars with François I., the Turks, and the Protestants.

Don Carlos listened with the greatest attention, and when his grandfather had finished, showing that the recital was no novelty for him, he exclaimed, —

"Oh, yes, that is how it all happened."

"But," returned the emperor, "you do not, my fair grandson, tell me what you think of my adventures, or whether you believe I have conducted myself as a brave man."

"Oh!" said the young prince, "I am well enough satisfied with what you have done; there is one thing, though, I cannot pardon you."

"Upon my word!" said the astonished emperor; "and, pray, what is it?"

"Your flight from Innspruck one night, half naked, before Duke Maurice."

"But I could not help it, I swear to you," answered the

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emperor, laughing. "He surprised me, and I had nothing to protect me but the house I was living in."

"Still, I would not have fled," said Don Carlos.

"What! you would not have fled?"

"No."

"But it was necessary to fly, since I had no means of resistance."

"I would not have fled," repeated the young prince.

"Should I have allowed myself to be taken, then? That would have been a great imprudence, for which I should have been blamed still more."

"No matter! I would not have fled," repeated the child for the third time.

"Tell me, then, what you would have done on such an occasion; and, to help you to an answer, what would you do at the present moment if I set thirty pages, say, at your heels?"

"I would not fly," the child contented himself with answering.

The emperor frowned, and, summoning the governor of the young prince, —

"Sir," he said, "take my grandson with you: I congratulate you on the education you are giving him; if he continues, he will be the greatest warrior of our family!"

The same evening, he said to Queen Eleonore, his sister, whom he was leaving at Valladolid: —

"I fear, sister, Don Philip is not fortunate in his son Don Carlos; his manners and disposition at such an early age do not please me. I cannot imagine what he is likely to be when he is twenty-five. Study the words and actions of this child, then, and when you write to me, tell me sincerely what you think on the subject."

Two days afterwards Charles entered Palencia, and on the ensuing day Queen Eleonore wrote, —

"My brother, if the manners of Don Carlos have displeased you after seeing him only on one day, they have much more displeased me after seeing him on three."

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This little man, who would not have fled from Innspruck, was the same Don Carlos who was put to death by his father, Philip II., twelve years later, under the pretext that he conspired with the rebels in the Low Countries.

At Valladolid the emperor had dismissed his entire court, with the exception of twelve domestics and twelve horses, reserving for his own use only a few rare and precious articles of furniture, and distributing all the rest among the gentlemen who had accompanied him; then he had bade farewell to the two queens, and set out for Palencia.

Palencia was eighteen miles from the monastery of Saint-Just, belonging to the order of Hieronimites, which the emperor had selected for his retreat, and where he had sent, during the preceding year, an architect to build six rooms for him on the ground-floor, four exactly like the cells of the monks, and two a little bigger. The artist was also to lay out a garden, on a plan designed by Charles himself.

This garden was the charming feature of the imperial retreat; it was watered on two sides by a little rivulet, limpid and murmuring, and planted with orange, lemon, and cedar trees, whose branches shaded and perfumed the windows of the illustrious recluse.

In 1542 he had visited this same monastery of Saint-Just, and, on leaving, said, —

"A real place of retreat for a second Diocletian."

The emperor took possession of his apartments in the monastery of Saint-Just on the 24th of February, 1557. It was the anniversary of his birth, and that day had always been a fortunate day for him.

"I wish," he said, on crossing the threshold, "to be born again for heaven on the same day on which I was born for earth."

Out of the twelve horses he had kept, he sent away eleven; he used the one he retained for riding occasionally in the delicious valley of Serandilla, distant only a mile, and which is called the Paradise of Estremadura.

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Starting from that moment, he kept up little communication with the world, receiving only rare visits from his old courtiers, and, once or twice a year, letters from King Philip, the Emperor Ferdinand, and the two queens, his sisters; his only distraction was the rides we have mentioned, the dinners he gave now and then to the gentlemen who visited him and whom he retained until evening, saying, "My friends, remain with me and live the religious life," and the pleasure he took in attending to the little birds of every species he kept in cages.

This life lasted a year; but, at the end of the year, it seemed still too worldly for the august solitary, and on the anniversary of his birth, the day also, it will be remembered, of his entrance into the monastery, he said to the Archbishop of Toledo, who had come to pay him a visit of ceremony: —

"My lord, I have lived fifty-seven years for the world, and a year for my intimate friends and servants in this lonely spot; now I wish to give to the Lord the few months I have still to live." And, in consequence, while thanking the prelate for his visit, he begged him not to take the trouble of coming again, except he called him for his soul's sake.

In fact, from the 25th of February, 1558, the emperor lived almost as austerely as the monks, eating with them, inflicting the discipline on himself, going regularly to the services, and not allowing himself any other distraction than that of having Masses said for the innumerable quantity of soldiers, sailors, officers, and captains who had died in his service in the different battles waged by himself or by his orders in the four quarters of the globe.

He had special Masses said in the name of the generals, councillors, ambassadors, and ministers — he had a perfectly exact register of the anniversary of their deaths — at private altars erected for the purpose; so that it might be said that, just as he had formerly placed his glory in reigning over the living, he now placed it in reigning over the dead.

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At last, growing tired, towards the beginning of the July of this same year, 1558, of assisting at the funerals of others, Charles V. resolved to assist at his own. However, it took some time to accustom him to this rather odd idea; he was afraid he would be taxed with pride and singularity in giving way to this desire; but at last it became irresistible, and he disclosed his intention to a monk of the same monastery, named Father John Regola.

It was with trembling that Charles ventured on this confidence, fearing the monk might throw some obstacle in the way of the execution of his plan; but the monk, on the contrary, to the great joy of the emperor, answered that, although it would be an extraordinary and unprecedented act, he saw no harm in it, and considered it even pious and exemplary.

Nevertheless, this approval by a simple monk did not seem to the emperor sufficient in such a grave circumstance; then Father Regola offered to take the opinion of the Archbishop of Toledo.

Charles thought the advice good, and the monk being appointed ambassador to the archbishop, set out on a mule, and with an escort, to get the desired permission.

Never in the days of Charles V.'s power had the return of a messenger, however important the message, been awaited with such impatience as was this one.

At last, at the end of a fortnight, the monk reappeared; the reply was favourable; the archbishop regarded the desire of the emperor as very holy and very Christian.

On the next day, which was a genuine festival, preparations were made to render the funeral ceremony worthy of the great emperor who was about to be buried alive.

The first thing undertaken was the construction of a magnificent mausoleum in the centre of the church; Father Vargas, who was an engineer and sculptor, made a design that was satisfactory to the emperor, except in some details which he retouched.

The design being approved, master joiners and painters

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were summoned from Palencia, who for five weeks employed twenty men each day in building this mausoleum. At the end of the five weeks, thanks to the activity inspired by the presence of the emperor, the mausoleum was finished. It was forty feet long, thirty broad, and fifty high; around it were galleries mounted by several staircases; there might be seen a series of pictures representing the most illustrious emperors of the House of Austria, and the principal battles of Charles V. himself. In fine, on the top was laid the bier, without a lid, having on its left Fame, and on its right Immortality.

Everything being completed, the morning of the 24th of August was fixed for this fictitious funeral.

At five o'clock, just an hour and a half after sunrise, four hundred immense tapers painted black were placed, lighted, on the sarcophagus, around which the domestics of the emperor were arranged, dressed in mourning, bareheaded, each with a torch in his hand. At seven Charles entered, clad in a long mourning robe, having on his right and left a monk garbed like himself. He sat down on a seat prepared for him in front of the altar, having also a torch in his hand. There, without a movement, his torch resting on the ground, he listened, living, to all the chants sung for the departed, from the Requiem to the *Requiescat*, while six monks of different orders said six Low Masses at the side altars of the church.

Then, at a given moment, he went, escorted by two monks, and bowed before the high altar. Kneeling at the feet of the prior, he said: —

"I ask and supplicate Thee, O arbiter and sovereign of our life and of our death, that, just as the priest takes from my hands with his this torch which I offer him in all humility, Thou mayest deign to receive my soul, which I commend to Thy divine clemency, and take it, when it is Thy will, into the bosom of Thy infinite goodness and mercy!"

Then the prior placed the taper in a silver chandelier of

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great size, which the counterfeit departed had presented to the monastery for this grand occasion.

After this Charles rose, and, always accompanied by the two monks, who followed him as his shadow, he went and took his seat.

The Mass over, the emperor judged that there remained something for him to do, and that they had forgotten the most important part of the ceremony: he then had a flagstone in the choir raised, and ordered a black velvet covering to be spread over the bottom of the ditch which had been excavated in accordance with his wishes, and a pillow to be also laid. Then, assisted by two monks, he descended into the ditch, stretched himself on his back, with his hands crossed over his breast and his eyes closed, counterfeiting death as well as he could.

Immediately the officiating priest intoned the *De Profundis Clamavi*, and while the choir was chanting it, all those monks clad in black, all those gentlemen and servants in mourning, with torches in their hands, shedding tears, defiled around the deceased, each in turn sprinkling holy water and wishing eternal rest to his soul.

The number carrying holy water was so large that the ceremony lasted more than two hours: consequently, the emperor was quite deluged with the holy water, which pierced through his black robe; this, joined to the cold and biting wind which blew on him up from the mortuary cellars of the abbey through the crevices in the stone, had such an effect on the emperor that he was shivering frightfully when, after all had left the church except himself and his two monks, he regained his cell. So that, feeling himself quaking all over, —

"I do not know, my good Fathers," he said, "if it was worth while, in truth, for me to get up again."

In fact, after entering his cell, Charles V. had to take to his bed, and, once in bed, he never did get up again; so that in less than a month after the counterfeit ceremony, the real ceremony was celebrated, and all that had been prepared for the fictitious death served for the true one.

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It was on the 21st of September, 1558, that the Emperor Charles V. rendered the last sigh in the arms of the Archbishop of Toledo, who was fortunately at Palencia, and whom the dying man sent for, for the last time, according to the promise he had made, six months before, to summon him at the hour of death.

He had lived fifty-seven years, seven months, and twenty-one days; he had reigned forty-four years, governed the empire thirty-eight, and as he had been born on the festival of one apostle, Saint-Mathias, so he died on the festival of another apostle, Saint-Matthew; namely, on the 21st of September.

Father Strada relates, in his "History of Flanders," that on the very night of the death of Charles V., a lily flowered in the garden of the monastery of Saint-Just; of which fact the monks having been informed, this lily was exposed on the high altar as an evident proof of the *whiteness* of the soul of Charles V.

History is a beautiful thing! And that is the reason why, not considering ourselves worthy to be a historian, we have become a romancer.

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SECOND PART.

I.

THE COURT OF FRANCE.

A LITTLE more than a year after the abdication of Charles V. at Brussels, about the period when the ex-emperor was isolating himself from the world in the monastery of Saint-Just, at the moment when, from the heights of Saint-Germain, the harvests of the plain could be seen yellowing in the distance, and just as the last days of July were rolling their clouds of flame in a sky of azure, a brilliant cavalcade was issuing forth from the old château and advancing into the park, whose fine tall trees were beginning to take on those warm hues which the painter loves.

A brilliant cavalcade, if ever there was one! for it was composed of King Henri II., his sister, Madame Marguerite of France, his mistress, the beautiful Duchesse de Valentinois, his daughter, Élisabeth de Valois, the young Queen of Scotland, Mary Stuart, and the principal lords and ladies who, at this time, made the ornament and glory of the House of Valois, — a house that succeeded to the throne in the person of François I., who died, as we have said, on the 31st of May, 1547.

Moreover, over one of the highest balconies of the château leaned Queen Catherine de Médicis, resting on an iron railing wrought as delicately as lacework, with the two young princes who were to be afterward Charles IX. and Henri III., but now, respectively, seven and six years old; and little Marguerite, five years of age, and destined to be Queen of Navarre. All three, as we may see, were

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too young to accompany their father to the hunt which was in preparation.

As for Queen Catherine, she had made a slight indisposition the pretext for not forming one of the hunting party; and as Queen Catherine was one of those women who never do anything without a reason, we may be very sure she had, if not a real indisposition, at least a reason for being indisposed.

All the personages we have named being required to take a very active part in the story we have undertaken to relate, the reader will permit us, before taking up the broken thread of events, to place before his eyes a physical and moral picture of these personages.

Let us begin with Henri II., who was riding in advance, having on his right Madame Marguerite, his sister, and on his left the Duchesse de Valentinois.

He was at this time a handsome, haughty chevalier of thirty-nine years, with black eyebrows, black eyes, black beard, a swarthy complexion, aquiline nose, and fine white teeth; not so tall, not so muscular as his father, but with a form admirably proportioned, which was above the middle height; fond of war to that degree that, when he had not one in his own states or in those of his neighbours, he wished to have the semblance of one in his court and in the midst of his pleasures.

And so, even in times of peace, King Henri II., — having barely that tincture of letters necessary for the dispensation of honourable rewards to poets, his opinions on whom were ready made, being all received from his sister Marguerite, his mistress, the fair Diane, or his charming little ward, Mary Stuart, — so, even in times of peace, we repeat, King Henri II. was the least idle man in his realm. Here is how he divided his days: —

His mornings and evenings — that is to say, the hours after rising and before retiring — were devoted to business; two hours in the morning were usually sufficient for the purpose. Then he heard Mass very piously; for he

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was a good Catholic, as he proved when he declared he would like to see Jean Dubourg, counsellor to the Parliament, burned with his own eyes, — a pleasure he could not have, however, as he died six months before the poor Huguenot was sent to the stake. He dined at noon, after which he paid a visit, accompanied by the lords and ladies of his court, to Queen Catherine, with whom he found, as Brantôme tells us, a crowd of *human goddesses*, one lovelier than the other. Then, while he entertained the queen, or madame his sister, or the little queen dauphiness, Mary Stuart, or his eldest daughters, each lord and gentleman did the same as the king, chatting with the lady who pleased him best. This lasted nearly two hours; then the king passed to his exercises. During summer these exercises were tennis.

Henri II. was passionately fond of tennis; not that he was a very skilful player, but he played second or tierce; that is to say, he always selected, in harmony with his adventurous character, the most dangerous or most difficult posts; so he was the best *second* and the best *tierce* in his kingdom, to use the language of the period. Moreover, it was he who always defrayed the expenses of the game, whether he won or lost: if he won, he abandoned the winnings to his partners; if the latter lost, he paid for them.

The stakes were usually from five to six hundred crowns, and not, as in the case of the kings his successors, four thousand, six thousand, ten thousand crowns. "But," says Brantôme, "the payments were made at once, whilst in our day you are obliged to submit to any number of honourable compositions."

The other exercises of the king held a secondary place in his esteem, but in them he was very adroit also.

If it was winter, and there was a hard frost, the court set out for Fontainebleau, and there was sliding either on the avenues of the park or on the ponds. When the snow had been excessive, bastions were erected, and there was a

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battle of snowballs; finally, if it rained instead of snowing, they scattered among the halls on the ground-floors, and practised fencing.

M. de Boucard had been the victim of this latter exercise. The king, when dauphin, happened, while fencing with him, to destroy one of his eyes, — *an accident for which he politely begged his pardon*, says the author from whom we borrow these details.

The ladies of the court were present at all these exercises, summer and winter, the opinion of the king being that their presence spoiled nothing, and gave a grace to many things.

In the evening, after supper, they returned to the queen; and when there was no ball, — an amusement, for that matter, rare enough at the time, — two hours were spent in conversation. The poets and men of letters were introduced; namely, MM. Ronsard, Dorat, and Muret, — *as clever Limousins as ever munched a turnip*, says Brantôme, — and MM. Danesius and Amyot, the tutors of Prince François and Prince Charles, respectively; and then there was between these illustrious jousters assaults of science and poesy which much delighted the ladies.

One thing — when by some chance it was thought of — cast a veil of mourning over this noble court; it was an unfortunate prediction made on the day of King Henri's accession to the throne.

A soothsayer, summoned to the château to draw his nativity, had announced, in presence of the Connétable Montmorency, that the king would die in single combat. Thereupon, the latter, quite joyous because such a death was promised him, turned to the constable, saying, —

"Do you hear, gossip, what this man promises me?"

The constable, believing the king frightened at the prediction, answered with his customary brutality: —

"What, sire! would you believe these rascals, who are nothing but liars and babblers? Let me fling the prediction in the fire, and him along with it, to teach such knaves to humbug us with such trickery!"

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But the king answered, "By no means, gossip; it sometimes happens, on the contrary, that these people tell the truth. And, besides, the prediction is not a bad one, in my opinion. I would rather die that death than any other, provided, of course, that I fall beneath the stroke of a brave and valiant gentleman, and that my glory remain intact."

And, instead of flinging the prediction and the astrologer into the fire, he munificently rewarded the latter, and gave the prediction into the keeping of M. de l'Aubespine, one of his good counsellors, whom he specially employed in diplomatic affairs.

This prediction was again discussed for a moment when M. de Châtillon returned from Brussels; for it will be remembered that Charles V., in the little house in the park, had requested the admiral to warn his fair cousin Henri that his captain of the Scotch Guard, Gabriel de Lorges, Comte de Montgomery, had between the eyes a fatal sign presaging the death of one of the princes of the *fleur-de-lis*.

But, reflecting on the matter, King Henri II. saw the little probability there was of a duel between him and his captain of the Guards, and, after classing the first prophecy among things possible and deserving attention, he classed the second among things impossible deserving no attention at all; so that, instead of separating from Gabriel de Lorges, as would perhaps have done a prince less timid, he, on the contrary, redoubled his favour and familiarity towards him.

We have said that Madame Marguerite of France, daughter of François I., was riding on the king's right.

Let us turn our attention, for a moment, to this princess, one of the most accomplished of the age, and more closely connected with our subject than any other.

The Princess Marguerite of France was born on the 5th of June, 1523, in that same château of Saint-Germain through whose door we have just passed; hence it follows

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that, at the moment we make her pass under the eyes of the reader, she was thirty-three years and nine months old.

How was it that so great and fair a princess remained so long without a spouse? For this there were two reasons: the first she had told aloud and before all; the second she did dare, perhaps, to whisper to herself.

When she was quite a young girl, François I. desired to marry her to M. de Vendôme, first prince of the blood; but she, proud even to disdain, replied that she would never marry a man who must some day be the subject of the king her brother.

This was the reason she gave aloud for remaining single, and not falling from her rank as a princess of France.

Let us now look at the reason she whispered to herself, and which was probably the true cause of her refusal.

At the time of the interview at Nice between Pope Paul III. and François I., the Queen of Navarre, by order of the king, visited the late Duke of Savoy in the castle of Nice, accompanied by her niece, Madame Marguerite. Now, the old duke thought the young princess charming, and spoke of a marriage between her and Emmanuel Philibert. The two children saw each other; but Emmanuel, entirely devoted to the exercises of his age, to his affection for Leona, and his friendship for Scianca-Ferro, hardly noticed the young princess. It was not the same with her; the image of the young prince had made a strong impression upon her heart, and when negotiations were broken off, and war was resumed between the King of France and the Duke of Savoy, she suffered from real despair, — a childish despair to which no one paid any attention, and which, for a long time, fed with her tears, had changed to a gentle melancholy, encouraged by that vague hope which never deserts tender and believing hearts.

Twenty years had vanished since that epoch; and now, under one pretext or another, Marguerite refused the hand of every suitor proposed to her.

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While waiting for the chances of fate or the decrees of Providence to second her secret wishes, she had grown, had advanced in years, and was now a charming princess, full of grace, pleasantness, and tender compassion, with beautiful blond hair, the colour of golden ears of corn, chestnut eyes, the nose a little pronounced, thick lips, and a complexion of a lovely white tinged with rose.

We have said that on the other side of the king rode Diane de Poitiers, Comtesse de Brézé, daughter of that Sieur de Saint-Vallier who, as an accomplice of the Connétable de Bourbon, had been condemned to be beheaded on the Grève, and who, when kneeling under the sword of the executioner, had been pardoned, — if the thing can be called a pardon, — and had his sentence commuted to perpetual imprisonment "within four walls, the floor and roof both built of stone, and with one little window only, through which he was to receive whatever he ate and drank."

Everything connected with Diane was mystery and marvel. She was born in 1499, and had, at the period we are describing, reached the age of fifty-eight years; yet, by her apparent youth and real beauty, she threw the fairest and youngest princesses of the court into the shade; so that the king loved her before all and above all.

Some of the mysterious and marvellous things told of the fair Diane, who had been created Duchesse de Valentinois by Henri II. in 1548, were the following: —

In the first place, she was most undoubtedly descended from the fairy Mélusine, and the king's love and her wonderfully preserved beauty were both results of this descent. Diane de Poitiers inherited from her ancestress, the great sorceress, the double secret, a secret rare and magical, of being always beautiful and always beloved.

Diane, it was stated, owed this eternal beauty to soups composed of potable gold. We know what an important ingredient was potable gold in the chemical preparations of the middle ages.

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This love without end was due to a magical ring the king had received from her, and which had the virtue of binding his love to her as long as he wore it.

The last report attained particular credit, for Madame de Nemours used to relate, to all who cared to listen, the anecedote we are about to relate in our turn.

The king having fallen sick, Queen Catherine de Médicis said to Madame de Nemours: —

"My dear duchess, the king has a great affection for you. Go to his chamber, sit near the bed, and, while talking with him, try to take from the third finger of the left hand the ring he wears on it; it is a talisman given him by Madame de Valentinois to make him love her."

Now, nobody in the court felt any very deep affection for Madame de Valentinois, not that she was ill-natured, but the young did not like her because she was so obstinate in continuing young, and the old women detested her because she would not become old. Madame de Nemours willingly took charge of the commission; and, having made her way into the king's chamber, and sat down near the bed, she succeeded in sportively drawing the ring from Henri's finger, he himself being quite ignorant of its virtue. But the ring was scarcely off the sick man's finger when he begged Madame de Nemours to whistle for his *valet de chambre.* We know that, up to the time of Madame de Maintenon, who invented bells, the gold or silver whistle was used by kings, princes, and great lords for summoning their people. The sick man then had begged Madame de Nemours to whistle for his *valet de chambre,* who, having entered immediately, received the king's order to close his doors to all comers.

"Even to Madame de Valentinois?" asked the astonished valet.

"To Madame de Valentinois as to others," answered the king, sharply; "the order admits no exception."

A quarter of an hour afterwards Madame de Valentinois presented herself at the king's door, and was refused admittance.

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She returned at the end of an hour: same refusal. Finally, at the end of two hours, in spite of a third refusal, she forced the door, entered, marched straight up to the king, took his hand, perceived that the ring was missing, made him confess what had passed, and insisted on Henri's getting the ring back from Madame de Nemours. The king's order to surrender the precious jewel was so peremptory that Madame de Nemours, who had not yet delivered it to Catherine de Médicis, grew frightened at the consequences, and sent it back. The ring once again on the king's finger, the fairy resumed all her power, which, indeed, since that day had gone on increasing.

In spite of the grave authorities who relate the history, — and note well that for the potable gold we have no less a witness than Brantôme, while to the truth of the affair of the ring, we have the solemn affirmations of De Thou and Pasquier, — we are tempted to believe that the beauty of Diane de Poitiers was unconnected with the miraculous, a beauty which was to have its counterpart a hundred years later in the case of Ninon de Lenclos; and we are disposed to accept, as the only and true magic used by her, that contained in the receipt she gave to any one for the asking; namely, a *bath of spring water* in all weathers, even the coldest. Besides, every morning she rose with the lark, rode for two hours, and on her return went to bed again, where she stayed till noon, reading, or chatting with her women.

But this has not been all: everything in connection with the fair Diane has been a subject of controversy, and the gravest historians would seem, in her regard, to have forgotten this first condition of history, which is to always have the proof standing behind the accusation.

Mézeray relates — and we are not sorry to catch Mézeray in a blunder — that François I. granted the pardon of Jean de Poitiers, father of Diane, only after he had deprived the daughter *of the most valuable thing she possessed.* Now this took place in 1523; Diane, born in 1499, was

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twenty-four at the time, and had been married to Louis de Brézé for ten years. We do not say that François I., a monarch chary in exacting his dues, did not impose certain conditions on the fair Diane; but it was not, as Mézeray says, on a young girl of fourteen that he imposed these conditions, and unless we want to calumniate poor M. de Brézé, to whom his widow raised that magnificent monument still admired in Rouen, we cannot imagine he allowed the king to deprive a woman of twenty-four of the most valuable thing she possessed at fourteen.

All we have written has, for that matter, only one object: to prove to our fair readers that the history written by romancers is far superior to the history written by historians; in the first place, because it is truer, and in the second, because it is more amusing.

To make a long story short, Diane, though at this period twenty-six years a widow, and twenty-one years King Henri's mistress, had, in spite of the fact that she was fully fifty-eight, the smoothest and loveliest complexion that could be seen, curly hair of the most bewitching black, a form of admirable symmetry, and a faultless neck and throat.

This was the opinion of old Connétable Montmorency, who, notwithstanding his sixty-four years, claimed to enjoy quite peculiar privileges in the case of the beautiful duchess, — privileges which would have rendered the king very jealous, if it were not an admitted fact that it is always the people interested in being the first to know a thing who know it last, and sometimes never know it at all.

We ask pardon for this long historico-critical digression; but if any woman in that graceful, lettered, and gallant court deserved the trouble of it, surely it was she who made her royal lover wear her colours as a widow, — black and white, — and adopt the crescent for an escutcheon inspired by her fine pagan name of Diane, with these words for a motto: *Donec totum impleat orbem!*

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We have said that behind King Henri II., having on his right Madame Marguerite of France, and on his left the Duchesse de Valentinois, came the Dauphin François, having on his right his sister Élisabeth, and on his left his betrothed, Mary Stuart.

The dauphin was fourteen, Élisabeth thirteen, Mary Stuart thirteen, — forty years in all.

The dauphin was a weak and sickly child, with pale complexion and chestnut hair. His eyes were dull and expressionless, except when they looked upon Mary Stuart; for then they became animated, and had an expression of desire which turned the child into a young man. Moreover, he was little inclined towards the violent exercises in which his father delighted, and seemed the prey of an incessant languor, the cause of which was vainly sought for by his physicians. They would have found it, perhaps, according to the pamphlets of the time, in the chapter of Suetonius's "Twelve Cæsars," where he relates the rides of Nero in a litter with his mother, Agrippina. Still, let us hasten to say it, Catherine de Médicis, both as a Catholic and a foreigner, was hated by one party, and we should not believe, without careful scrutiny, everything related in the pasquinades, ribald songs, and satires of the times, almost all products of the Calvinistic press. The premature deaths of the young princes, François and Charles, to whom their mother preferred Henri, contributed not a little to give credit to all these malicious rumours which have traversed the ages, and have come down to us, wearing an aspect of almost historic authenticity.

The Princess Élisabeth, although a year younger than the dauphin, was much more of a young woman than he was of a young man. Her birth had been at once a private joy and a public happiness; for, at the very moment she appeared in the world, peace was signed between François I. and Henry VIII. Thus, she who by her marriage was to bring about peace with Spain, by her birth brought about peace with England. Besides, her father, Henri II.,

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held her in such esteem for her beauty and character that, having married her younger sister, Madame Claude, to the Duc de Lorraine, he replied to some one who was remonstrating with him on the wrong this marriage did the elder: "My daughter Élisabeth is not one of those who are satisfied with a duchy for dowry; she needs a kingdom, and not one of the minor kingdoms either, but one of the grandest and noblest, so grand and noble is she herself in everything!"

She won the kingdom promised her, and with it misfortune and death.

Alas! a better fate was not awaiting that lovely Mary who rode on the left of the dauphin, her betrothed!

There are misfortunes which have such a reverberation that they have awakened an echo through the whole world, and which, having attracted on their objects the gaze of their contemporaries, still attract on them the eyes of posterity whenever the utterance of some name recalls them.

Such are the misfortunes — misfortunes somewhat deserved, perhaps — of the fair Mary. They have so far surpassed the ordinary measure that the faults, even crimes, of the guilty queen have disappeared in presence of the exaggeration of the chastisement.

But, all the same, the little Queen of Scotland followed joyously her path in a life saddened at its beginning by the death of her father, the chivalrous James V.; her mother wore for her that Scottish crown of thorns, which, according to the words of her father, "came with a lass and would go with a lass!" On the 20th of August, 1548, she arrived at Morlaix, and for the first time touched the soil of France, where her happiest days were passed. She brought with her that garland of Scotch roses called the Four Marys, who were of the same age, born in the same year and month as herself, and who were named Mary Fleming, Mary Seaton, Mary Livingstone, and Mary Beaton. She was at this time an adorable child, and, as

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she grew, became an adorable young girl. Her uncles, the Guises, who believed they saw in her the realisation of all their ambitious projects, and who, not content with extending their sway over France, dreamed of extending it by her means over Scotland, perhaps over England, made her the object of their ardent worship. Thus the Cardinal de Lorraine wrote to his sister, Marie de Guise:—

"Your daughter has increased, and is every day increasing in goodness, beauty, and virtue; the king spends his time conversing with her, and she addresses him in words as good and wise as would a woman of twenty-five years of age."

But it was now the bud of this impassioned rose that was opening to love and pleasure. Not knowing how to do anything which did not please her, she did, on the contrary, with ardour, everything that pleased her: did she dance, it was until she fell exhausted; did she ride, it was at a gallop, and until the best steed was worn out; did she attend a concert, the music sent through her electric thrills.

Sparkling with precious stones, flattered, caressed, and adored, she was, at the age of thirteen, one of the marvels of that court of Valois, so full of marvels. Catherine de Médicis, who was not specially fond of her son, said, "Our little Scottish queen has only to smile to turn all French heads."

Ronsard said:—

> "Midst the lilies of Spring her fair body was born,
> Of whose whiteness a copy the lily alone is,
> And the bloom on her red cheeks laughèd to scorn
> The roses tinged with the blood of Adonis.
> The darts in her eyes were Love's own darts,
> And the heavenly Graces, with zeal and fervor,
> Imparted to her all that heaven imparts
> And left their abodes from a craving to serve her."

And of all these charming flatteries, the royal child could comprehend the delicate shades: prose and verse had

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no secrets from her. She spoke Greek, Latin, Italian, English, Spanish, and French; and while poetry and science made for her a crown, the other arts had her protection. The court was constantly changing its place of residence; and so she was led with it from Saint-Germain to Chambord, from Chambord to Fontainebleau, from Fontainebleau to the Louvre. There she grew more fascinating every day beneath the ceilings of Primatice, in the midst of the canvases of Titian, the frescoes of Rosso, the masterpieces of Leonardo da Vinci, the statues of Germain Pilon, the sculptures of Jean Goujon, the monuments, porticoes, chapels of Philibert Delorme; so that any one seeing her so poetic, so charming, so perfect among all those marvels of genius, would be tempted to believe that she was not a visible creation belonging to humanity, but rather some metamorphosis, like that of Galatea, some Venus detached from the canvas, some Hebe descended from the pedestal.

And now, as we lack the pencil of the painter, we can only try, with the pen of the romancer, to give an idea of that intoxicating loveliness.

She was, we have said, about fourteen years old. Her complexion was a blending of the lily, the peach, and the rose, with a little more of the lily, perhaps, than of all the rest. Her forehead was high and rounded in the upper part, and seemed the fitting seat of lofty dignity, being at once — strange mixture — full of gentleness, intelligence, and daring. One felt that the will enclosed by that forehead, if directed towards love and pleasure, would leap beyond ordinary passions, and when its voluptuous and despotic instincts should need satisfaction, would not hesitate even at crime. Her nose, fine and delicate, yet firm, was aquiline, like those of the Guises. Her ear was small, and with the convolutions of a shell of mother of pearl, irised with rose under the palpitating temple. Her brown eyes, of that tint which wavers between chestnut and violet, were of a humid transparency, and, however

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full of flame, under chestnut lashes and eyebrows designed with an antique purity. In fine, two charming curves formed a mouth with purple lips, tremulous and half-opened, which, in smiling, seemed to spread joy around her, and which surmounted a vigorous chin, white, rounded, and lost in contours which insensibly united with an undulating, velvety neck like that of a swan.

Such was the young girl whom Ronsard and Du Bellay named their *tenth Muse;* such was the head destined thirty-one years later to rest on the block of Fotheringay, and to be separated from the body by the axe of Elizabeth's executioner.

Alas! if a magician came and told all that crowd, gazing upon the brilliant cavalcade, plunging under the great trees of the park of Saint-Germain, the fate that awaited these kings and princes and princesses, these great lords and great ladies, is there a woollen jacket or a drugget gown that would have changed its lot for that of these fine gentlemen in silks and velvets, or of these fair dames with corsages embroidered with pearls and gold-brocaded petticoats?

Let us allow them to wander under the gloomy vaults of chestnut and beech, and return to the château of Saint-Germain, where we have said that Catherine de Médicis remained, under pretext of a slight indisposition.

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II.

THE KING'S HUNT.

Hardly had the pages and equerries, forming the last ranks of the *cortège*, disappeared in the depths of the coppices which succeed the great trees, and which, at this period, made a sort of girdle to the park of Saint-Germain, before Catherine withdrew from the balcony, leading Charles and Henri with her, and then, sending the elder away to his professor, and the younger to his woman attendants, she remained alone with the little Marguerite, still too young for people to trouble themselves about what she might see or hear.

When Catherine's two sons were gone, her confidential *valet de chambre* entered, and announced that the two persons she expected were at her orders, in her cabinet.

She rose immediately, hesitated an instant to consider whether she would not dismiss the young princess, as she had dismissed the young princes, but, doubtless judging her presence of little danger, she took her by the hand, and proceeded towards her cabinet.

Catherine de Médicis was at this time a woman of thirty-eight years, of a fine and generous presence, and of great majesty. Her dark eyes were almost always half-closed, except when she felt it necessary to read to the bottom of the hearts of her enemies; then their look had the twofold brilliancy and the twofold keenness of two blades drawn from their scabbards, and plunged at the same time into the same breast, where they remained buried until its most secret recesses were explored.

She had suffered much, and had smiled much to hide her sufferings. At first, during the ten years of her marriage

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— which were barren, and during which it was twenty times debated whether she should not be repudiated, and a new spouse given to the dauphin — her husband's love protected her and struggled obstinately against the most terrible of all reasons, — a state reason. Finally, in 1544, after being married eleven years, she gave birth to Prince François.

But her husband had already become the lover of Diane de Poitiers nine years before.

Perhaps if she had been a happy mother and a fruitful spouse from the beginning of her marriage, she would, as woman and queen, have struggled against the fair duchess; but her barrenness reduced her to a lower rank than that of a mistress.

Instead of struggling, she yielded, and by her humility earned the protection of her rival.

Moreover, all these brave lords, all these brilliant warriors who had no esteem for any nobility that had not its root in blood, and was not a flower gathered on the field of battle, made little case of the commercial race of the Médicis. They played on the name and on the coat of arms: her ancestors were doctors, *medici;* their arms were not cannon-balls, but pills, they said.

Mary Stuart, who caressed with her pretty hand the Duchesse de Valentinois, sometimes used the same hand as a claw to scratch Catherine.

"Are you coming with us to see the Florentine tradeswoman?" she said to Connétable de Montmorency.

Catherine drank all these insults to the dregs: she was waiting. What was she waiting for? She did not know herself for certain. Henri II. was of the same age as she, and his health promised him a long life. No matter; she waited with the obstinacy of genius, which, feeling and appreciating its own value, understands that God makes nothing useless, and therefore the future held something in store for her.

At this time she belonged to the party of the Guises.

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The character of Henri was weak, and he could never be sole master: now he was master with the constable, and the Guises were in disgrace; now he was master with the Guises, and it was the constable who was out in the cold.

And so the following quatrain had been made on Henri II.

"Sire, if you let yourself be too much governed,
And kneaded, melted, this and that way turned,
As Charles and Diane both alike require, 't is *cire* (wax)
You are, and surely no more *sire*."

We know who Diane was; as to Charles, he was the Cardinal de Lorraine.

And, indeed, the family of Lorraine was a proud and noble family. One day came Duc Claude to render homage to François I. at the Louvre. He was accompanied by his six sons, and King François said to him, "My cousin, I hold you for a very fortunate man to see yourself renewed before dying in such a fair and wealthy posterity."

These words were true: Duc Claude, at his death, left behind him the richest, ablest, and most ambitious family in the kingdom. These six brothers, presented to François by their father, possessed a revenue of about eight hundred thousand livres; that is to say, more than four millions, according to the value of money at present.

First came the eldest, he who was called Duc François *le Balafré*, the great Duc de Guise, in fact. His position at court was that of a prince of the blood. He had a chaplain, eight secretaries, twenty pages, eighty officers, kennels whose tenants were only inferior to the greyhounds of the king, "the royal pedigree," as the term then was; stables filled with Arabian horses brought from Africa, Turkey, and Spain; gerfalcons and falcons beyond price, sent him by Soliman and all the infidel princes, who presented them to him as tokens of their respect for his fame. The King of Navarre wrote to him to announce the birth of his son, afterwards Henri IV. The Connétable de Montmorency, the haughtiest baron of his age, in writ-

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ing to him, began his letter with *Monseigneur*, and ended with *Your very humble and obedient servant*, while he, on the other hand, addressed him as, *M. le Connétable* and *Your very good friend;* which, for that matter, was far from being true, the House of Guise and the House of Montmorency being at eternal feud.

It is necessary to read the chronicles of the time, either placed before our view by the aristocratic pen of Brantôme, or registered hour by hour in the journal of the Grand Audiencier Pierre de l'Estoille, to form an idea of the power of this privileged race, as much at home in the streets as on the field of battle, as eagerly listened to in the stalls of the markets as in the cabinets of the Louvre, Windsor, and the Vatican, especially when it spoke through the lips of Duc François. Just only look at the cuirass in the Musée d'Artillery, which the eldest of the Guises wore at the siege of Metz, and you will see there the trace of five balls, three of which would certainly have been mortal if they had not been deadened against the rampart of steel.

Consequently, it was a joy for the population of Paris when he issued forth from the Hôtel de Guise, and when, far better known and more popular than the king himself, mounted on *Fleur-de-lis* or *Mouton*, — they were his two favourite steeds, — with his pourpoint and breeches of crimson silk, his velvet mantle, his cap surmounted by a plume of the same colour, and followed by four hundred gentlemen, he traversed the streets of the capital. All flocked to see him on his passage, some breaking off branches and others plucking flowers and casting branches and flowers under his horse's feet, while crying, —

"Long live our Duke!"

And he, standing up on his spurs, as he did on the field of battle, in order to see farther and invite danger to himself, or leaning down to the right and left, with a courteous salutation for the women, the aged, and, indeed, for all human beings, with a smile for the young girls, and a

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caress for the children, he was the true king, not of the Louvre, Saint-Germain, Fontainebleau, or Tournelles, but the king of the streets and market stalls, — a true king, a real king, since he was king of hearts!

So, at the risk of the truce of which France had so great need, when Pope Paul III., — on account of a private quarrel with the Colonna, who were rendered bold enough to take up arms against the Holy See by the support they expected to find in Philip II., — when the Pope, we say, because of this quarrel, declared that the King of Spain had forfeited the kingdom of Naples, and offered this realm to Henri II., the king had no hesitation in naming François de Guise commander-in-chief of the army he sent into Italy.

It is true that on this occasion, and perhaps for the first time, Guise and Montmorency happened to be of one mind. For, when François de Guise was outside of France, Anne de Montmorency was sure to be the first person in the realm; and, while the great captain was pursuing beyond the mountains his plans of glory, Montmorency, who believed himself a great statesman, was pursuing his plans of ambition at the court, and his most ardent ambition was, for the moment, to marry his son to Madame Diane, the legitimate daughter of the Duchesse de Valentinois, and widow of the Duke of Castro, of the House of Farnese, killed at the assault of Hesdin.

François de Guise was then at Rome, making war on the Duke of Alba.

With Duc François was the Cardinal de Lorraine, a great prince of the church, scarcely inferior to his brother in anything, and whom Pope Pius V. called the Pope beyond the mountains. "He was," says the author of the "History of Mary Stuart," "a two-edged sword as a negotiator, as proud as a Guise and as subtle as an Italian." Later on he was to conceive, mature, and put into execution that great idea of the League which placed his nephew on the steps of a throne up to the moment when both nephew

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and uncle fell, pierced by the swords of the Forty-five. When the six Guises were at court, the four, the Duc d'Aumale, the Grand Prior, the Marquis d'Elbeuf, and the Cardinal de Guise never failed to come first to the levee of Cardinal Charles; then all five went to that of Duc François, who conducted them to the king.

Both, for that matter, — the one as a warrior, the other as a churchman, — had erected their batteries for the future: Duc François had become the master of the king, and Cardinal Charles the lover of the queen. The grave Estoille relates the fact in a manner that cannot leave the most incredulous reader in doubt: "One of my friends told me that, having slept with the valet of the cardinal in a chamber next to that of the queen-mother, he saw the cardinal, dressed only in a *robe de chambre*, going to see the said queen, and that his friend begged him not to mention it to any one, or he might lose his life."

As to the four princes of the House of Guise, to attempt their portrait would lead us too far, and, besides, the part they play in our story is almost null. Let us confine ourselves, therefore, to those we have sketched of Duc François and Cardinal Charles.

It was Cardinal Charles whom we have beheld one night, *dressed only in a robe de chambre, going to see the said queen*, that was waiting for Catherine de Médicis in her cabinet.

Catherine knew she should find him there, but she expected to find him alone.

He was, however, accompanied by a young man of from twenty-five to twenty-six years, elegantly clad, although still wearing his travelling-dress.

"Ah! it is you, M. de Nemours!" exclaimed Catherine, as soon as she perceived him. "You arrive from Italy? What news from Rome?"

"Bad!" replied the cardinal, while the Duc de Nemours saluted the queen.

"Bad! Could our dear cousin the Duc de Guise have

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been beaten?" asked Catherine. "Take care! Though you answered yes, I would say no, to such a degree do I hold the thing impossible!"

"No, madame," replied Nemours, "M. de Guise has not been beaten; as you say, the thing is impossible! But he has been betrayed by the Caraffa, abandoned by the Pope himself; and he has despatched me to the king to tell him that the position was no longer tenable either for his own glory or for that of France, and that he demanded reinforcements or a recall."

"And, according to our arrangements, madame," said the cardinal, "I have led M. de Nemours to you first."

"But," said Catherine, "the recall of M. de Guise is the abandonment of the King of France's claim to the kingdom of Naples, and of mine to the duchy of Tuscany."

"Yes," said the cardinal; "but you may be quite sure, madame, that we shall soon have war in France, and that then we shall not so much think of conquering Naples and Florence as of protecting Paris."

"What, Paris? You are laughing, M. le Cardinal. It seems to me that France can defend France, and Paris can protect herself without any help."

"I am afraid you are mistaken, madame," replied the cardinal. "The best of our troops, counting on the truce, have passed into Italy with my brother; and, certainly, except for the ambiguous conduct of Cardinal Caraffa and the treason of the Duke of Parma, who has forgotten what he owed to the King of France, and deserted to the emperor, our prospects of success in Naples, and the necessity under which Philip II. would have laboured of stripping himself to protect Naples, would have safeguarded us from an attack; but now that Philip II. is sure he has men enough in Italy to hold us in check, he will turn his eyes in the direction of France, and not fail to profit by its weakness. Need I add that the nephew of M. le Connétable has been guilty of a piece of folly which will give to the rupture of the truce by Philip II. an appearance of justice?"

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"You mean his attack on Douai?"

"Decidedly."

"Listen," said Catherine. "You know I like the admiral as little as you do yourself; so you may do him as much harm as you can without my placing any obstacle in your way; on the contrary, I will help you all I can."

"Meanwhile, what do you decide on doing?" said the cardinal. And seeing that she hesitated, "Oh!" he said, "you can speak before M. de Nemours; he is of Savoy, it is true, but as much our friend as his cousin Emmanuel Philibert is our enemy."

"Decide yourself, my dear cardinal," casting an oblique glance at him; "I am but a woman whose weak mind has little skill in affairs of state. Decide, then."

The cardinal had understood the look of Catherine: for her there were no friends; there were only accomplices.

"No matter, madame," said Charles; "be good enough to give an opinion, and I shall take the liberty of combating it, should it happen to be in contradiction with mine."

"Well, I think," said Catherine, "that the king, being the head of the state, ought to be informed of these important things before all others. In my opinion, then, if M. de Nemours is not too tired, he ought to take a horse, join the king wherever he is, and transmit to him the intelligence which your kindness, my dear cardinal, has made me mistress of before him who should be first to hear it."

The cardinal turned to the Duc de Nemours, as if to question him.

"I am never fatigued, monseigneur," he said, "when the service of the king is in question."

"In that case," said the cardinal, "I shall order a horse for you, and also warn the secretaries that the king will hold a council on his return from the chase; come, M. de Nemours."

The young duke respectfully saluted the queen, and made ready to follow the Cardinal de Lorraine, when Catherine lightly touched the arm of the latter.

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"Pass before me, M. de Nemours," said Charles de Guise.

"Monseigneur —" returned Jacques de Nemours, hesitating, "I beg of you to do so."

"And I order you, M. le Duc," said Catherine, offering him her hand.

The duke, understanding that the queen doubtless had a last word to say to the cardinal, no longer made a difficulty of obeying; and, kissing her hand, he went out first, designedly letting the hangings fall back behind him.

"What did you want to say to me, my dear queen?"

"I wanted to say to you," replied Catherine, "that the good King Louis XI., who, in exchange for five hundred thousand lent him, gave to our ancestor Lorenzo de Médicis leave to place three *fleurs-de-lis* in our arms, was in the habit of repeating: 'If my nightcap knew my secret, I would burn it!' Meditate on this maxim of the good King Louis, my dear cardinal. You are too confiding!"

The cardinal smiled at the warning given him; he, who passed for the most distrustful statesman of the time, had met with a distrust greater than his own.

It is true he met it in the Florentine, Catherine de Médicis.

The cardinal, in turn, broke through the rampart of the tapestry hangings, and saw the prudent young man, in order not to be accused of curiosity, waiting for him ten paces further on in the corridor.

Both descended into the courtyard, where Charles de Guise ordered a page of the stables to bring him a horse, ready saddled, at once.

The page returned in five minutes, leading the horse. Nemours leaped into the saddle with the elegance of a consummate cavalier, and rode at a gallop through the main alley of the park.

The young man had been careful to ask information as to the direction taken by the chase, and was told the animal would be attacked near the road to Passy.

He, therefore, rode towards that point in the expectation

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that the sound of the horn would guide him to the spot where the king happened to be. But when near the road to Passy, he saw and heard nothing.

He questioned a woodcutter, who told him that the hunt was now somewhere in the direction of Conflans. He immediately turned his horse towards the point indicated.

At the end of an hour, while crossing a transverse path, he perceived, in the middle of a neighbouring crossroad, a rider who was standing up in the stirrups, in order to see farther, and was holding his hand to his ear in order to hear better.

This rider was a hunter, evidently trying to find his way.

However astray this hunter might be, he was better likely to have an idea of the probable situation of the king than the young duke, who had arrived from Italy hardly half an hour before. So M. de Nemours rode straight up to the hunter.

The latter, seeing a horseman approaching, and thinking he might learn something from him about the progress of the chase, also advanced some steps.

But soon both, with a similar movement, set spurs to their horses; they had recognised each other.

The strayed hunter, who tried to find his way by standing up in his stirrups in order to see, and holding his hand to his ear in order to hear, was the captain of the Scotch Guard.

The two cavaliers approached with that courteous familiarity which distinguished the young lords of the period.

Moreover, although, it is true, the Duc de Nemours was of a princely house, the Comte de Montgomery belonged to the oldest Norman nobility, a descendant of that Roger de Montgomery who helped William the Bastard to conquer England.

Now, at this period, there existed in France some old names that believed themselves the equals of the most puissant and glorious names, in spite of the inferiority of the titles they bore. It was so with the Montmorencys,

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whose title was only that of baron; with the Rohans, who were only seigneurs; with the Coucys, who were only sires; and with the Montgomerys, who were only counts.

As Nemours had guessed, Montgomery had lost track of the hunt, and was trying to find his way.

For that matter, the place where they found themselves was well chosen for the purpose, since it was a crossroad situated on an elevation towards which every sound must ascend, and commanding five or six paths, by one of which the animal would not fail to pass, when driven by the beaters.

The two young noblemen, who had not seen each other for more than six months, had, besides, a thousand important questions to ask: Montgomery on the subject of the army and the deeds of high emprise which M. de Guise must have naturally essayed; the other on the subject of the French court, and the fine love-adventures that must have taken place there.

They were at the liveliest part of this interesting conversation when Comte Montgomery laid his hand on the arm of the duke. He fancied he heard the baying of the pack in the distance.

Both listened. De Lorges was not deceived: at the extremity of an immense alley they saw an enormous boar pass as swiftly as an arrow; then, some fifty paces behind him, the most eager of the hounds, then the bulk of the pack, then the stragglers.

At the same moment Montgomery put his horn to his lips and sounded the sighting of the game, in order to rally such as, like himself, had gone astray; and the number must have been great, for three persons only were on the track of the animal, — a man and two women.

From the ardour with which he urged his steed, the two believed it was the king; but the distance was so great that it was impossible to tell who were the bold Amazons following him so closely. All the rest of the hunt seemed completely out of its reckoning.

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Nemours and Montgomery galloped to an alley which, in view of the direction taken by the animal, allowed them to cut the chase at a right angle.

The king had, in fact, attacked the beast, which, in terms of venery, was what was called a *ragot*. It had made for one direction with the obstinacy of the older animals, and was dashing straight along on the road to Conflans. The king was at once on its track, and at the sound of his horn all the court followed the king.

But boars are bad courtiers: the one with whom, for the moment, they had to do, instead of choosing the way through the great old forest-trees and along the easy paths, had dashed into the thickest copses and closest briars; hence it resulted that, at the end of a quarter of an hour, only the most enthusiastic hunters were near the king, and that of all the ladies only three held out. These were Madame Marguerite, the king's sister, Diane de Poitiers, and Mary Stuart, the little *reinette*, as Catherine de Médicis called her.

In spite of the courage of the illustrious hunters and huntresses we have named, the difficulties of the ground, the thickness of the wood, which obliged the riders to make détours, and the height of the clumps of briars, which it was impossible to clear, soon caused them to lose sight of boar and hounds; but, at the extremity of the forest, the animal met a wall, and was forced to return on his traces.

The king, distanced for an instant, but sure of his hounds, then halted. This gave a few hunters time to join him; the baying was soon heard again.

The portion of the forest for which the animal was now making a set was more open than the other; as a consequence, the king could resume the chase with a chance of soon having the boar at bay.

Only, the same thing happened that happened ten minutes before: each held out according as his strength and courage allowed him. Moreover, in the midst of this

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court, entirely composed of fair lords and gallant dames, many, perhaps, stayed behind, without being absolutely forced thereto by the slowness of their horses, by the thickness of the wood, or the inequalities of the ground; and this was clearly proved by the attitude of the groups stopping at the corners of the alleys and in the middle of the crossroads, which seemed more attentive to the conversation that was going on than to the baying of the hounds or the horns of the whippers-in.

And so it happened, when the animal came in view of Montgomery and Nemours, it was followed by only a single horseman, in whom they recognised the king, with two ladies whom they did not know.

It was, in fact, the king, who, with his usual ardour, wanted to be the first at the death, to be present at the moment when the boar would make a stand backed against some tree or rock, and would face the hounds.

The two Amazons following the horseman were Madame de Valentinois and little Queen Mary, — the one the best, the other the boldest, rider in the entire court.

The boar, for that matter, was growing tired; clearly, he would have to come to a stand before long; the fiercest of the dogs were already breathing close to his hide.

For a quarter of an hour, however, he tried to escape his enemies by flight; but, feeling them nearer and nearer, he resolved to die bravely, like the courageous animal he was, and, finding a stump of a tree convenient, he planted himself there, growling and striking his immense jaws together.

No sooner had he stopped than the pack was on him, and indicated, by its redoubled baying, that the animal was making a stand.

With the baying, the sound of the horn was soon mingled. Henri arrived, following the dogs as closely as they followed the boar.

He looked around him while winding his horn in search of his arquebusier; but he had distanced even the most

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active whippers-in, even those whose duty it was never to lose sight of him, and saw, galloping up with all the speed of their horses, only Diane and Mary Stuart, who, as we have said, held out.

Not a ringlet of the fair duchess's head was out of place, and her velvet cap was fixed as firmly on the top as at the moment of setting out.

As for little Mary, she had lost veil and cap; and her beautiful chestnut hair, scattered to the breeze, as well as the charming flush on her cheeks, bore witness to the ardour of the chase.

At the prolonged notes the king drew from his horn, the arquebusier appeared, one arquebuse in his hand, and the other hanging from the bow of his saddle.

Behind him might be seen, through the thickness of the wood, golden broideries and the dazzling colours of robes, doublets, and mantles. It was the hunters and huntresses now approaching from all sides.

The animal was doing his best; attacked at the same time by sixty dogs, he made head against all his enemies. It is true that while the sharpest teeth were blunted on his wrinkled hide, every stroke of his tusks made a deadly wound in such of his adversaries as came within its reach; but, although mortally injured, although losing all their blood, and with their entrails dragging along the ground, the *king's greys*, as they were called, were such a noble breed that they only returned the more furiously to the combat, and it could only be known that they were wounded by the stains of blood that streaked this moving carpet.

The king saw it was time to put an end to the butchery, if he were not to lose his best dogs. He threw away his horn, and made a sign for his arquebuse.

The match had been lit; the arquebusier had but to present the weapon to the king. Henri was a good marksman, and rarely missed his aim.

With the arquebuse in his hand, he advanced to within

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about twenty paces of the boar, whose eyes shone like two live coals. He aimed between the eyes, and fired.

The animal received the discharge in his head; but by a movement he made when the king had his hand on the trigger, the animal slightly inclined his head, and the ball glanced off the bone, killing one of the dogs.

The track of the ball could be seen between the eye and the ear of the boar by the blood that indicated its passage.

Henri remained astonished for an instant at the circumstance that the boar had not at once fallen, while his horse, all quivering, his hind legs bending under him, was beating the ground in front of him.

He handed the arquebuse to the groom, and demanded another. The other was ready, with the match lit; the groom presented it.

The king took it, and raised the butt to his shoulder. But, before he had time to aim, the boar, doubtless unwilling to risk the chance of a second shot, scattered the dogs surrounding him by a violent thrust, opened a bloody pathway through the middle of the pack, and, quick as lightning, passed between the legs of the king's horse, which reared, giving an agonising neigh, showed his belly, from which the blood and entrails were dropping, and suddenly fell down, with the king under him.

All this had been so instantaneous that not one of the spectators thought of rushing in front of the boar, which now turned on the king before he even had time to draw his hunting-knife.

Henri tried to reach it; it was impossible. The hunting-knife was under the king's left side, and so placed that it was useless to think of extricating it.

Brave as the king was, his mouth was already opened to cry for help — for the hideous head of the boar, its eyes of flame, its bloody jowl, and teeth of steel were within a few inches of him — when suddenly he heard a voice in his ear, whose firm accents there was no mistaking, saying to him, —

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"Do not stir, sire; I answer for everything!"

Then he felt an arm, which raised his, and saw, like a flash of lightning, a broad, keen blade pass under his shoulder, and plunge up to the hilt in the body of the boar.

At the same moment two vigorous arms drew him back, leaving, exposed to the animal, only the new adversary who had stricken it to the heart.

He who pulled the king back was the Duc de Nemours. He who, with his knee on the ground and his arm extended, had just stricken the boar to the heart was the Comte de Montgomery.

Montgomery drew his sword from the body of the animal, wiped it on the green, grassy turf, returned it to the scabbard, and, approaching Henri II. as if nothing extraordinary had occurred, —

"Sire," said he, "I have the honour to present to you M. le Duc de Nemours, who has just come from beyond the mountains, and brings news of M. le Duc de Guise and his brave army of Italy."

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III.

CONSTABLE AND CARDINAL.

Two hours after the scene we have described, the spectators having appeased their private or official emotion, congratulations having been tendered to Gabriel de Lorges, Comte de Montgomery, and to Jacques of Savoy, Duc de Nemours, the two saviours of the king, on the courage and address displayed by them on the occasion, and the quarry — a matter whose importance even the gravest affairs did not permit to be neglected — having been disposed of in the great court of the château, in the presence of the king, queen, and all the lords and ladies staying at Saint-Germain, Henri II., with a smiling countenance, as was natural in the case of one just escaped from imminent death, and who feels the fuller of life and health on account of the very greatness of the peril, — Henri II., we say, entered his cabinet, where, besides his ordinary councillors, the Cardinal de Lorraine and the Connétable de Montmorency were awaiting him.

We have already mentioned the Connétable Montmorency; but we have neglected to do for him what we have done for the other heroes of our tale, — that is to say, to exhume him from the tomb and make him stand up before our readers, like that great Connétable de Bourbon who was carried by his soldiers, after his death, to a painter, in order that a portrait of him might be painted standing all armed, as if he had been alive.

Anne de Montmorency was, then, the head of that old family of Christian barons of France, as they were entitled, sprung from Bouchard de Montmorency, and which has given ten constables to the realm.

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He was called, and so styled himself, Anne de Montmorency, — Duke, Peer, Marshal, Grand-Master, Constable, and First Baron of France; Knight of Saint-Michael and of the Garter; Captain of the king's hundred orderlies; Governor and Lieutenant-General of Languedoc; Comte de Beaumont, Dammartin, La Fère-en-Tardenois, and Châteaubriant; Vicomte de Melun and Montreuil; Baron d'Amville, Préaux, Montbron, Offemont, Mello, Châteauneuf, Rochepot, Dangu, Méru, Thoré, Savoisy, Gourville, Derval, Chanceaux, Rougé, Aspremont, and Maintenay; Seigneur d'Écouen, Chantilly, L'Isle-Adam, Conflans-Sainte-Honorine, Nogent, Valmondois, Compiègne, Gandelu, Marigny, and Thourout.

As may be seen from this nomenclature of titles, the king might be king in Paris, but Montmorency was duke, count, and baron all around Paris; so that royalty itself seemed imprisoned in his duchies, counties, and baronies.

Born in 1493, he was, at the period we have reached, an old man of sixty-four who, though looking his age, had the strength and vigour of a man of thirty. Violent and brutal, he had all the rough qualities of the soldier, — blind courage, ignorance of danger, insensibility to fatigue, hunger, and thirst. Full of pride, swollen with vanity, he yielded to none but the Duc de Guise, and to him only as a prince of Lorraine, for as a general he believed himself the superior of the defender of Metz and the conqueror of Renty.

In his eyes Henri II. was the *little master;* the great master had been François I., and he declined to recognise any other. An eccentric courtier and a man of tenacious ambition, he gained advantages tending to increase his wealth and power by his brutality and insolence, which another could only have obtained by suppleness and adulation. Moreover, Diane de Valentinois aided him very much in his schemes; seconding the violent old trooper with her gentle voice and look and countenance, she smoothed down all the antipathies his vehemence created, and without her help he would not have succeeded. He

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had been already in four great battles, and in each had done the work of a vigorous man-at-arms, but in none that of an intelligent leader. These four battles were, first, that of Ravenna; he was then sixteen years old, and followed, as an amateur and for his own pleasure, the general standard in the capacity of volunteer. The second was that of Marignano. There he commanded a company of a hundred men-at-arms, and he would have been able to boast that the most vigorous strokes were given by his sword and mace, had he not had near him, and often in front of him, his great master François I., — that hundred-handed giant, as he might be called in a certain sense, who would have conquered the world, if the world was to be conquered by him who struck the strongest and doughtiest blows. The third was that of La Bicoque, where he was colonel of the Swiss, and where he handled the pike and was left for dead. In fine, the fourth was that of Pavia. He had then become Marshal of France by the death of M. de Châtillon, his brother-in-law. Not suspecting that the battle was to take place the next day, he set out during the night to make a reconnoissance; hearing the roar of the cannon, he returned, and was taken "with the rest," says Brantôme. And, in fact, at that disastrous defeat of Pavia, every one was taken, even the king.

Unlike M. de Guise, who had the strongest sympathies of the bourgeoisie and the men of the robe, he detested the bourgeois and execrated the lawyers. He let no occasion slip of giving a piece of his mind to both of them. It happened that the president of a court came to speak to him one very hot day on the subject of his office. M. de Montmorency received him with his cap in his hand, and said, —

"Come, M. le President, say what you have to say at once, and in the mean time cover yourself."

But the president, believing it was to do him honour that Montmorency remained uncovered, replied, —

"Monsieur, I cannot think of covering myself until you do the same."

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"Why, you must be a consummate fool, monsieur!" said the constable. "Do you really fancy I have taken off my cap through love of you? No; it has been for my own ease, my friend, seeing that I am dying of the heat. Go on; I am listening."

At which the president, all confused, could do nothing but stammer. Thereupon said Montmorency to him, —

"You are an idiot, M. le President! Go home and learn your lesson; then return, but not before."

And he turned on his heel.

The people of Bordeaux having revolted and killed their governor, the constable was sent against them. They, knowing he was coming and that the reprisals would be terrible, went a two days' journey to meet him, carrying the keys of the city.

But he addressed them, fully armed and on horseback: "Begone, Messieurs of Bordeaux," he said, — "begone, you and your keys! I have no need of them." And, pointing to the cannons, "There are my keys; they will open your city in a different fashion from the way you open it. Ah, I 'll teach you to rebel against the king and kill his governor and lieutenant! You may stake your faith, I 'll have every one of you hanged!"

And he kept his word.

At Bordeaux, M. de Strozzi, who had manœuvred his troops the evening before in his presence, came to pay his respects to him, although a relation of the queen. As soon as Montmorency saw him, he exclaimed: —

"Ha! good-day, Strozzi! your fellows did wonders yesterday, and they made a really fine sight; they shall have their money, therefore, to-day. I have ordered it."

"Thanks, M. le Connétable," replied Strozzi; "I cannot tell you how delighted I am to find you are satisfied with them, for I have a petition to make to you on their part."

"What is it, Strozzi? Say on!"

"They say that wood is awfully dear in this city, and

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the sums they are paying for it during the present severe cold are actually ruining them; they beg you to give them a ship, called the 'Montreal,' which is beached on the strand and of no further use, so that they may break it up and warm themselves."

"Why, of course I will!" said the constable; "let them set about the thing at once, break it up and warm themselves as well as they can, for it is my pleasure."

But while he was at dinner, the aldermen and councillors of the city came to him. Whether Strozzi had seen badly, or had been deceived by the report of the soldiers, or had but little acquaintance with ships old or new, the one whose demolition he asked for was still capable of making many a prosperous voyage. These worthy magistrates came, therefore, to represent to Montmorency what a pity it would be to cut up so fine a vessel, which had so far only made two or three voyages, and was registered at three hundred tons.

But the constable interrupted them in his customary tone before they were half-way: —

"Good! good! And pray who are you, you idiots, to venture to prescribe to me? You must think yourselves no small people when you dare to thus utter a remonstrance in my presence. If I acted rightly, — and I don't know what is keeping me from doing it, — I should send and have your houses pulled to pieces instead of the ship; and if you are not out of this in a jiffy, it's just what I shall do. Go home and mind your own business; don't meddle with mine!"

And the same day the ship was broken up.

During the intervals of peace, the great anger of Montmorency was exercised on the ministers of the Reformed religion, for whom his hatred was ferocious. One of his relaxations was to go into the temples of Paris and hunt them from their pulpits; and, having one day discovered that they were holding a consistory with permission of the king, he made his way to Popincourt, entered the assem-

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bly, overturned the pulpit, broke all the benches and made a great bonfire of them; this expedition won him the surname of Captain Brûle-Bancs.

And all these brutalities were accomplished by the constable while mumbling his prayers, and especially the Lord's Prayer, which was his favourite, and which he combined in the most grotesque fashion with the barbarous orders he gave and never revoked.

Misfortune was abroad when he began in some such way as this: —

"Our Father who art in heaven (*Go and hang that fellow at once!*), hallowed be Thy name (*String yon other fellow up to that tree!*). Thy kingdom come (*Let that rascal run the gauntlet of the pikes!*). Thy will be done on earth (*Have those scoundrels shot immediately!*), as it is in heaven. (*Cut in pieces all those knaves who dared to hold the tower against me!*) Give us this day our daily bread (*Burn me yonder village*), and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who have trespassed against us! (*Set fire to the four corners, and let not one house escape!*) And lead us not into temptation (*If the clowns cry out against it, fling them into the fire also!*), but deliver us from evil. *Amen!*"

This was called the *Pater-Nosters* of the constable. Such was the man Henri II. found, on entering his cabinet, seated in front of the keen, crafty, aristocratic Cardinal de Lorraine, the most courteous of high-born churchmen and the shrewdest statesman of his time.

It is easy to undertand that these two natures, so absolutely contrary to each other, must constantly come in collision, and must give great trouble to the state by their ambitious rivalries.

And the more so that Montmorency's family was almost as numerous as that of Guise, the constable having had by his wife, Madame de Savoie, daughter of Messire René, bastard of Savoy and Grand-Master of France, five sons, — MM. de Montmorency, d'Amville, de Méru, de Montbron,

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and de Thoré, and five daughters, of whom four were married to MM. de la Trémouille, De Turenne, De Ventadour, and de Candale, the fifth and most beautiful of all becoming Abbess of Saint-Pierre de Rheims.

Now all these illustrious people had to be well established, — a subject on which the grasping constable was meditating when the king entered.

On perceiving Henri, all rose and uncovered.

The king saluted Montmorency with a friendly and almost soldier-like gesture, while he bowed to the cardinal with every appearance of deference.

"I have summoned you, gentlemen," he said, "for the subject on which I have to consult you is grave. M. de Nemours has arrived from Italy, where affairs are turning out badly, owing to the failure of his Holiness to keep his word, and the treason of most of our allies. Everything, at first, succeeded wonderfully. M. de Strozzi captured Ostia; it is true we lost in the trenches of the city M. de Montluc, — a brave and worthy gentleman, for whose soul, gentlemen, I ask your prayers. Thereupon, the Duke of Alba, knowing the near arrival of your illustrious brother, my dear cardinal, retired to Naples. All the places in the neighbourhood of Rome were, in consequence, successively occupied by us. In effect, after crossing the Milanese, the duke advanced to Reggio, where his father-in-law, the Duke of Ferrara, awaited him with six thousand infantry and eight hundred cavalry. There a counsel was held between Cardinal Caraffa and Jean de Lodève, ambassador of the king. One party was of opinion that Cremona or Pavia ought to be attacked, while Maréchal de Brissac was holding the enemy in check; the other represented that before either could be occupied, the Duke of Alba would have doubled his army by raising levies in Tuscany and the kingdom of Naples. Cardinal Caraffa was of a different opinion: he proposed entering the march of Ancona through the Terra di Lavoro, all whose fortresses, being badly fortified, would, he said, surrender at the first sum-

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mons; but the Duke of Ferrara insisted, on the other hand, that the defence of the Holy See being the principal object of the campaign, the Duc de Guise should march straight on Rome. The Duc de Guise decided for the latter course, and wished to take with him the six thousand infantry and eight hundred cavalry of the Duke of Ferrara, who refused, saying he might be attacked at any moment by the Grand Duke Cosmo de Médicis or by the Duke of Parma, who had just joined the Spaniards. M. de Guise, gentlemen, was then obliged to continue his march with the few troops left him, having no hope except in the contingent which, according to Cardinal Caraffa, was to join the French army at Bologna. Arrived at Bologna with the cardinal, his nephew, the duke looked in vain for this contingent. It did not exist. Your brother, my dear cardinal, complained loudly; but Caraffa answered that he was going to look up ten thousand men lately levied in the march of Ancona. The duke tried to believe in this promise, and continued on his way through the Romagna. No reinforcement came to him; he left our army there under the command of M. d'Aumale, and proceeded to Rome directly, to learn from the Holy Father himself what he intended to do. The Pope, driven to the wall by M. de Guise, replied that he agreed, indeed, to have a contingent of twenty-four thousand men for this war, but that among these twenty-four thousand were comprised the soldiers holding the strong places of the Church; now those thus employed numbered eighteen thousand. M. de Guise saw he could only reckon on the men he had with him; but, according to the saying of the Pope, these men ought to be enough, as the French had never failed, up to this time, in their enterprises on Naples, except when they had the Sovereign Pontiff against them. Now this time, instead of being against them, the Sovereign Pontiff was with them; and, thanks to this moral and spiritual co-operation, the French were sure to succeed. M. de Guise, my dear constable, is a little like you in this

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respect: he never doubts of his fortune when he has his good sword by his side, and a few thousand brave men behind him. He hastened the coming of his army; and as soon as it joined him, he marched out of Rome, attacked Campli, carried it by storm, and put all, men, women, and children, to the sword."

The constable received the news of this execution with the first visible sign of approbation he had given.

The cardinal remained impassive.

"After Campli," continued the king, "he laid siege to Civitella, which is, it appears, built on a craggy hill, and well supplied with fortifications. He began by battering down the citadel; but before a practicable breach could be made, our soldiers, with their usual impatience, risked an assault. Unfortunately, the place they tried to force was defended on all sides by bastions; our army was repulsed with the loss of two hundred killed and three hundred wounded."

A smile of joy broke over the lips of the constable; the invincible hero had failed before a shed.

"Meanwhile," the king went on, "the Duke of Alba had gathered his troops together at Chieti, and now marched to the succour of the besieged with an army of three thousand Spaniards, six thousand Germans, three thousand Italians, and three hundred Calabrians. It was more than double the number possessed by the Duc de Guise. This inferiority determined the duke to raise the siege and meet the enemy in the open plain between Fermo and Ascoli. He hoped the Duke of Alba would accept the battle offered him; but the Duke of Alba, sure that we should be ruined in any case, simply occupied the country, and would accept neither battle nor encounter except in positions that left us no chance of success. In this situation, without hopes of obtaining from the Pope either men or money, M. de Guise sends M. de Nemours to me to ask a considerable reinforcement, or leave to quit Italy and return. What is your opinion, gentlemen? Should we make one last effort,

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and send our well-beloved duke the men and money he absolutely needs, or recall him, and, by recalling him, renounce our claims to that fair kingdom of Naples, which, on the promise of his Holiness, we had intended for our son Charles?"

The constable made a gesture, as if to ask leave to speak, while at the same time indicating that he was ready to give way to the Cardinal de Lorraine; but the latter, by a slight motion of the head, gave it to be understood he might speak first.

It was, for that matter, the usual tactics of the cardinal to let his adversary speak first.

"Sire," said Montmorency, "my opinion is that we must not abandon an affair so well begun, and that your Majesty should omit no effort to support your army and your general in Italy."

"And you, M. le Cardinal?" said the king.

"As for me," said Charles de Guise, "I must ask M. le Connétable to excuse me, but my opinion is absolutely opposed to his."

"That is no surprise to me, M. le Cardinal," answered Montmorency, bitterly. "It would have been the first time we agreed, were it otherwise. So you think, monsieur, your brother ought to return?"

"It would be, I believe, good policy to recall him."

"Alone or with his army?"

"With his army to the last man!"

"And why so? Do you think there are not enough of bandits prowling already on the highways? I happen to know there is a regular harvest of them."

"There are perhaps bandits enough prowling on the highways, M. le Connétable,— there is perhaps a regular harvest of them, as you say; but we have no harvest of brave soldiers and great captains."

"You forget, M. le Cardinal, that we are in full peace, and, being in full peace, we can do without your sublime conquerors."

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"I beg your Majesty to ask M. le Connétable," said the cardinal, turning to the king, "if he believes seriously in the duration of peace."

"*Morbleu!* if I believe in it," said the constable, — "a nice question that!"

"Well, I am so far from believing in it," said the cardinal, "that I think if your Majesty does not wish to let the King of Spain have the glory of attacking you, you should at once attack the King of Spain."

"In spite of the truce solemnly sworn?" cried the constable, with such ardour that one would have believed in his sincerity. "But do you forget, M. le Cardinal, that it is a duty to keep one's oath? that the word of a king ought to be more inviolable than any other word, and that France has never been a recreant to her good faith, even when dealing with Turks and Saracens?"

"But then, if this is so," asked the cardinal, "why has your nephew, M. de Châtillon, instead of remaining quiet in his government of Picardy, attempted to surprise and scale the walls of Douai, in which he would have succeeded but for an old woman passing, by chance, near the place where the ladders were planted, who gave the alarm to the sentinels?"

"Why has my nephew done that?" said Montmorency, at once falling into the snare. "I am just going to tell you why he has done that."

"We are listening," said the cardinal.

Then, turning to the king, with a marked purpose in his accent, he said, —

"Listen, Sire."

"Oh, his Majesty knows it as well as I do, *mordieu!*" said the constable; "for though he appears entirely taken up with his loves, have the goodness to learn, M. le Cardinal, that we do not leave him entirely ignorant of state affairs."

"We are listening, M. le Connétable," returned the cardinal, coldly; "you were about to tell the reason why M. l'Amiral made the attack on Douai."

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"The reason! I could give you ten instead of one, *mordieu!*"

"Give them, M. le Connétable."

"First," replied the latter, "the attempt made by Comte Mègue, governor of Luxembourg, through the agency of his maître d'hôtel, who corrupted three soldiers of the garrison by a present of a thousand crowns in hand and promise of a pension of the same amount, for which they were to deliver up the city."

"The city which my brother has so gloriously defended; it is true," said the cardinal, "we have heard of that attempt, which, like your nephew's, has happily failed. But this makes only one excuse, and you have promised us ten, M. le Connétable."

"Oh, wait. Are you not yet aware that this Comte Mègue suborned a Provençal soldier of the garrison of Marienbourg, who, in return for the large sum given him, engaged to poison the wells of the fortress, and that the enterprise only failed because Comte Mègue did not think a single man sufficient for the job, and the others he tried to deal with discovered the conspiracy. You will not say the thing is false, M. le Cardinal, for the soldier was broken alive on the wheel."

"That would hardly be a reason for convincing me. You have, during your lifetime, M. le Connétable, broken on the wheel and hanged not a small number of people whom I consider as innocent and as much martyrs as those whom the Roman emperors named Nero, Commodus, and Domitian sent to die in their circuses."

"*Mordieu!* M. le Cardinal, would you perchance deny this enterprise of Comte Mègue on the wells of Marienbourg?"

"On the contrary, M. le Connétable, I told you I admitted it. But you promised us ten excuses for the enterprise of your nephew, and we have only two so far."

"You shall have them, *mordieu!* you shall have them! Are you ignorant, for example, that Comte Berlaimont,

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intendant of the finances of Flanders, made a plot with two Gascon soldiers and got them to pledge themselves, with the help of Sieur de Vèze, captain of a company of foot in the king's service, to deliver the city of Bordeaux to the King of Spain, provided they were seconded by five or six hundred men? You just say no to this fresh plot of the Catholic king, and I shall answer that one of these two soldiers, arrested near Saint-Quentin by the governor of the place, confessed everything, and acknowledged that he had even received the reward promised in the presence of Antoine Perrenot, Bishop of Arras. Come now, M. le Cardinal, say no! *mordieu*, say no!"

"I have not the slightest intention of doing so," replied the cardinal, smiling, "seeing that it is the truth beyond doubt, M. le Connétable, and I do not care to expose my soul to peril by such a lie. But this only makes three infractions of the treaty of Vaucelles by his Majesty the King of Spain, and you have promised us ten."

"Oh, I can easily furnish you ten, or a dozen if you want them! For instance, has not Maître Jacques de Flèche, one of King Philip's best engineers, been caught sounding the fords of the Oise, and conducted to La Fère, where he confessed that Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, had ordered M. de Berlaimont to pay him money for drawing the plans of Montreuil, Roye, Doullens, Saint-Quentin, and Mézières, — places the Spaniards want to seize, — in order to control Boulogne and Ardres and prevent the revictualling of Marienbourg?"

"All this is perfectly correct, M. le Connétable, but we are not yet near the ten."

"Eh, *mordieu!* do we require ten in order to see that the truce has, in reality, been broken by the Spaniards, and that if my nephew, M. l'Amiral, has made an attempt on Douai, he had a perfect right to do so?"

"And I have no intention of asking you to say anything farther, M. le Connétable; those four proofs are enough to show me that the truce has been broken by Philip II.

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Now, the truce being broken, not once, but four times, it is the King of Spain who violates his word by breaking the truce, and not the King of France who will violate his by recalling from Italy his army and general and preparing for war."

The constable bit his white moustaches; the crafty spirit of his adversary had just made him confess the opposite of what he had meant to say.

But the cardinal had hardly ceased speaking, and the constable biting his moustaches, when the sound of a trumpet playing a foreign air was heard in the courtyard of the château of Saint-Germain.

"Oh, oh!" said the king, "what mischievous page is that, lacerating my ears with an English air? Go and find out, M. de l'Aubespine, and let the little rascal have a sound whipping for his merry pranks."

M. de l'Aubespine went out to execute the orders of the king.

Five minutes after, he returned.

"Sire," said he, "it is neither page, equerry, nor whipper-in who has played the air in question; it is an English trumpeter accompanying a herald sent you by Queen Mary."

Scarcely had M. de l'Aubespine finished these words, when the trumpet sounded again, this time playing a Spanish air.

"Ah!" said the king, "after the wife, the husband, it would seem."

Then, with that majesty which all those old kings of France knew how to assume so well when the occasion needed, —

"Messieurs," he said, "to the throne-room! Warn our officers, as I shall the court. Whatever be the message our cousin Mary and our cousin Philip may send us, it is necessary to do honour to their messengers."

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IV.

WAR.

The sounds from the English and Spanish trumpets had re-echoed, not only in the hall of council, but throughout the entire palace, being, as they were, a sort of double echo from the North and from the South.

The king found, therefore, that the court was already pretty well informed of the condition of things; all the ladies were at the windows, and eyes were fixed curiously on the two heralds and their suite. At the council door, the constable was met by a young officer sent him by his nephew Coligny, — the same Coligny we saw entering the room of Charles V. on the evening of his abdication.

The admiral was, as we have already said, governor of Picardy; he would therefore, in case of invasion, be the one first exposed to attack.

"Ah, it is you, Théligny!"[1] said the constable, in a low voice.

"Yes, monseigneur," replied the young officer.

"And you bring news of the admiral?"

"Yes, monseigneur."

"Have you seen or spoken to any one on the subject, so far?"

"The news is for the king, monseigneur," answered the young officer; "but I have been directed to communicate it to you first."

"Very well," said the constable; "follow me."

[1] This Théligny was no relation of the kinsman of Coligny of the same name killed in the massacre of Saint-Bartholomew.

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And just as the Cardinal de Lorraine had led the Duc de Nemours to the apartments of Catherine de Médicis, so the constable led M. de Théligny to those of Madame de Valentinois.

But, in the mean time, the reception was being held.

At the end of a quarter of an hour, the king, — having the queen on his right, all the great officers on the steps of the throne; around him, seated in armchairs, Madame Marguerite and Madame Élisabeth of France, Mary Stuart, the Duchesse de Valentinois, the four Marys; in fine, the entire brilliant court of the Valois, — the king gave orders for the English herald to be introduced.

Long before he made his appearance, the jingling of his spurs and of those of the men-at-arms forming his escort was heard in the ante-chambers. At last he crossed the threshold, clad in the tabard with the English arms embroidered on it, and advanced with his head covered, stopping within ten steps of the throne. There he uncovered, and, putting one knee to the ground, said in a loud voice: —

"Mary, Queen of England, Ireland, and France, to Henri, King of France, greeting! Because you have given aid and comfort to the English Protestants, enemies of our person, religion and state, and because you have promised them succour and protection against the just prosecutions of which they are now the object, we, William Norry, declare war against you on land and sea, and as a sign of defiance, we throw here the glove of battle."

And the herald flung at the feet of the king his iron gauntlet, which resounded harshly on the floor.

"It is well," replied the king, without rising. "I accept this declaration of war; but I wish the whole world to know that I have kept the good faith due to our mutual good friendship; and, since it is her pleasure to attack France for so unjust a cause, I hope, through the favour of God, that she will gain no more by her action than her predecessors have done when they have attacked mine.

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For that matter, I speak to you mildly and civilly, because it is a queen who sends you; if it were a king, I would speak to you in a different tone."

And, turning to Mary Stuart, —

"My gentle Queen of Scotland," he said, "as this war concerns you not less than me, and as you have quite as many rights to the crown of England as my sister has to that of France, if not more, pick up, I pray you, that glove, and make a gift to the brave Sir William Norry of the gold chain around your neck, which the Duchesse de Valentinois will be good enough to replace by the chain of pearls she has on hers. I, in turn, shall replace in such manner that she shall not suffer too much loss thereby. Go! To pick up a woman's glove, a woman's hands are needed!"

Mary Stuart rose, and, with all her exquisite grace, unfastened the chain from her neck and flung it round that of the herald; then, with that lofty air that so well became her countenance, —

"I pick up this glove," she said, "not only in the name of France, but also in the name of Scotland! Herald, tell my sister Mary what I have said."

The herald stood up, bent his head slightly, and, stepping back to the left of the throne, said, —

"It shall be done according to the desires of King Henri of France and Queen Mary of Scotland."

"Introduce the herald of our brother Philip II.," said the herald.

The same jingling of spurs was heard, announcing the approach of the Spanish herald, who entered still more haughtily than had his colleague; and, all the time twisting his Castilian moustaches, he approached within ten steps of the king, and said, without bending the knee, contenting himself with a slight inclination of the head, —

"Philip, by divine clemency, King of Castile, Leon, Granada, Navarre, Aragon, Naples, Sicily, Majorca, Sardinia, the isles, Indias, and lands of the ocean; Archduke

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of Austria; Duke of Burgundy, Lothier, Brabant, Limbourg, Luxembourg, and Guelders; Count of Flanders and Artois; Marquis of the Holy Empire; Seigneur of Friesland, Salins, Malines, the cities and countries of Utrecht, Overyssel, and Groenigen; Sovereign in Asia and Africa; to you, Henri of France, we make known that because of the assault made on the city of Douai, and the pillage of the city of Sens, both having been by the orders and under the direction of your governor of Picardy, and because we regard the truce sworn between you and us at Vaucelles as broken, we declare war against you on land and sea; as gage of which defiance, in the name of my said king, prince and lord, I, Guzman d'Avila, herald of Castile, Leon, Granada, Navarre, and Aragon fling here my glove of battle."

And, ungloving his right hand, he flung the glove insolently at the feet of the king.

Then the deeply tanned and manly face of Henri II. became pale, and in a somewhat altered tone he replied:

"Our brother Philip II. anticipates us, and therefore we have some reason to reproach him; but he would have done better, since he has so many personal grievances against us, to have made of this quarrel a personal quarrel. We would have very willingly answered for our acts face to face and body to body, and the Lord God would then have judged between us. Tell him, however, Don Guzman, that we accept with the utmost confidence the war which he declares against us; but I should be far more pleased still, if he were to arrange a meeting between me and him instead of one between our two armies."

And as the constable touched his arm meaningly, —

"And you will add," continued Henri, "that when I made this proposal, my good friend, M. de Montmorency, touched my arm, because he knows there is a prophecy that I shall die in a duel. Well, at the risk of the fulfilment of that prophecy, I persist in the proposal, although I have no doubt that this prediction will give sufficient

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confidence to my brother to induce him to accept. M. de Montmorency, I pray you, as Constable of France, to pick up the glove of King Philip."

Then to the herald, —

"Stay, my friend," he said, taking a bag placed behind him for the purpose, and full of gold, "it is far from here to Valladolid; and as you have come hither to bring us such good news, it is not fitting that you should spend your master's money or your own on the route. Take, therefore, these hundred crowns of gold to defray the expenses of your journey."

"Sire," replied the herald, "my master and I belong to a country where gold grows, and we have only to stoop to pick it up."

And, saluting the king, he took a step backward,

"Ah, proud as a Castilian!" murmured Henri. "M. de Montgomery, take that sack and make largess of what it contains through the window."

Montgomery took the sack, opened the window, and threw the gold to the lackeys in the court, who received it with joyous hurrahs.

"Gentlemen," continued Henri, rising, "there is always high festival at the court of France when a neighbouring sovereign declares war on its king; there shall be double festival this evening, since we have received declarations of war at the same time from a king and a queen."

Then, turning to the two heralds who were standing, the one on his left, the other on his right, —

"Sir William Norry, Don Guzman d'Avila," said the king, "seeing that you are the causes of the festival, you are, as representing King Philip, my brother, and Queen Mary, my sister, invited to it of right."

"Sire," whispered the constable to Henri, "would it please you to hear the fresh news from Picardy, brought from my nephew by a lieutenant of the dauphin's regiment named Théligny?"

"Yes, indeed," said the king. "Bring him to me; he shall be welcome."

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Five minutes afterwards, the young man was led into the chamber of arms, and, bowing respectfully before the king, waited until the latter should address him.

"Well, monsieur," said the king, "what news do you bring of the health of M. l'Amiral?"

"As far as that goes, excellent, sire; never has M. l'Amiral been stronger."

"Then may God keep him so, and all will be well! Where did you leave him?"

"At La Fère, sire."

"And what news did he charge you to transmit to me?"

"Sire, he has charged me to tell your Majesty to prepare for a serious war. The enemy has assembled more than fifty thousand men, and M. l'Amiral believes that all his preceding attempts have been only a false demonstration to conceal his real plans."

"And what has the enemy been doing up to now?" asked the king.

"The Duke of Savoy, who is commander-in-chief," replied the young lieutenant, "has advanced as far as Givet, accompanied by Count Mansfield, Count Egmont, the Duke of Aerschott, and the principal officers of his army, where the general rendezvous of the hostile forces was established."

"I have learned as much through the Duc de Nevers, governor of Champagne," said the king; "he even added, in his despatches on the subject, that he believed Emmanuel Philibert aimed principally at Rocroy and Mézières; and, believing Rocroy, which has been only lately fortified, was in bad condition to sustain a siege, I recommended the Duc de Nevers to see if it would not be better to abandon it. Since that time I have had no news of him."

"I bring some to your Majesty," said Théligny. "Sure of the strength of the place, M. de Nevers shut himself up in it, and, sheltered behind its walls, has so well received the enemy that after several skirmishes, in which he lost a few hundred men, he has forced him to retire across the

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ford of Houssu, between the village of Nismes and Hauteroche; from thence the enemy took his way by Chimay, Glayon, and Montreuil-aux-Dames; passed by La Chapelle, which he pillaged, and Vervins, which he reduced to ashes; in fine, he has advanced as far as Guise, and M. l'Amiral has no doubt it is his intention to besiege that place, in which M. de Vassé has shut himself up."

"What troops does the Duke of Savoy command?" asked the king.

"Flemish, Spanish, and German troops, sire; very nearly forty thousand foot and fifteen thousand horse."

"And how many can M. de Châtillon and M. de Nevers dispose of?"

"Sire, were they to unite all their forces, they could hardly dispose of eighteen thousand infantry, and from five to six thousand cavalry; without reckoning that, among the latter, are fifteen hundred or two thousand Englishmen, whom it would be necessary to distrust, in case of war with Queen Mary."

"So that, considering the number of men we shall be forced to leave as garrisons in the cities, twelve or fourteen thousand men are the most we shall be able to give you, my dear constable," said Henri, turning to Montmorency.

"Well, be it so, sire; with the few you give me I shall do my best. I have heard that a famous general of antiquity, named Xenophon, had only ten thousand soldiers under his orders when he accomplished a magnificent retreat of a hundred and fifty leagues; and that Leonidas, King of Sparta, commanded at most a thousand men when he arrested for eight days, at Thermopylæ, the army of King Xerxes, which was, however, far more numerous than that of the Duke of Savoy."

"So you are not discouraged, my dear constable?" said the king.

"Quite the contrary, sire! And, *mordieu!* I have never been so joyous and of such good hope. I only want to find a man who can give me some information as to the state of Saint-Quentin."

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"Why so, constable?" asked the king.

"Because with the keys of Saint-Quentin the gates of Paris are opened, Sire; it is an old proverb. Do you know Saint-Quentin, M. de Théligny?"

"No, monseigneur; but if I dared —"

"Dare then! dare, *mordieu!* the king permits you."

"Well, then, M. le Connétable, I have with me a kind of groom given me by M. l'Amiral, who, if he wishes, can, I fancy, give you some information on the state of the city."

"What! if he wishes!" cried the constable. "He shall wish, you may be certain."

"Without doubt," said Théligny, "he will not dare to refuse answering the questions of M. le Connétable, only, as he is a very shrewd rascal, he may answer them after his own fashion."

"After his own fashion? You 'll find his own fashion will be after mine, M. le Lieutenant."

"Ah! that is just the point on which I would beg you not to make any mistake. He will answer after his own fashion, and not after yours; seeing that as you, monseigneur, do not know Saint-Quentin, you cannot tell whether he is speaking the truth or not."

"If he does not speak the truth, I shall have him hanged."

"Yes; it is a means of punishing him, but not of utilising him. Believe me, M. le Connétable, he is an adroit, cunning fellow, very brave when he wishes —"

"How, when he wishes? He is not brave at all times, then?" interrupted Montmorency.

"He is brave when others are looking on, and when they are not looking on, if it is his interest to fight. One can't expect anything more of an adventurer."

"My good constable," said the king, "he who wishes the end wishes the means. This man may render us some services. M. de Théligny knows him; let M. de Théligny conduct the inquiry."

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"Be it so," said the constable; "but I assure you, sire, I have a way of talking to people —"

"Yes, monseigneur," replied Théligny, smiling, "we know your way, and it has its good side; but with Master Yvonnet, it would have the effect of sending him to the side of the enemy on the first opportunity; and he could render them all the services against us which he can now render us against them."

"To the side of the enemy, *morbleu!* to the side of the enemy, *sacrebleu!*" shouted the constable. "Why, in that case, he ought to be hanged at once. He is a cut-throat, a bandit, a traitor then, this groom of yours, M. de Théligny."

"He is an adventurer quite simply, monseigneur."

"Oh, oh! and my nephew makes use of such rascals?"

"War is war, monseigneur," rejoined Théligny, laughing.

Then, turning to the king, —

"I place my poor Yvonnet under the safeguard of your Majesty, and ask that, whatever he may say or do, I may bring him back with me as safe and sound as I have brought him hither."

"You have my word," said the king; "go and fetch your groom."

"If the king permit," replied Théligny, "I shall content myself with making a sign to him, and he will come up."

"Do so."

Théligny opened a window looking on the park, and beckoned to some one.

Five minutes afterwards, Master Yvonnet appeared at the threshold of the door, clad in the same cuirass of buffalo, the same maroon-velvet jacket, the same boots, in which we have already presented him to the reader.

He held in his hand the same cap adorned with the same plume.

Only everything was two years older than then. A copper chain, which was once gilt, was hanging from his neck and playing sportively on his breast.

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The young man only needed a glance to show him with whom he had to deal, and doubtless he recognised M. le Connétable or the king, or perhaps both, for he kept himself respectfully near the door.

"Come forward, Yvonnet; come forward, my friend," said the lieutenant, "and know you are in presence of his Majesty Henri II. and of M. le Connétable, who, on account of the way I have extolled your merits, have desired to see you."

To the great stupefaction of the constable, Master Yvonnet did not appear the least astonished in the world at his merits gaining him such an honour.

"I thank you, lieutenant," said Yvonnet, taking three steps and then halting, half through distrust, half through respect; "my merits, small though they be, are at the feet of his Majesty and at the service of M. le Connétable."

The king noticed the difference the young man placed between the homage rendered to the royal majesty and the obedience offered to M. de Montmorency.

Without doubt, this difference also struck the constable.

"All right!" he said; "no phrases, my fine fellow! Answer squarely, or if not—"

Yvonnet darted a glance at Théligny which meant, "Do I run any danger, or is it an honour they are doing me?"

But, strong in the king's promise, Théligny took hold of the interrogatory.

"My dear Yvonnet, the king knows you are a gallant cavalier," he said; "very much admired by the ladies, and that you devote to your toilet all the revenues your intelligence and courage can procure. Now, as the king desires to put your intelligence to the test at once, and your courage later on, he charges me to offer you ten golden crowns if you consent to give him, as well as to M. le Connétable, some positive information respecting the city of Saint-Quentin."

"Would you have the goodness to tell the king, lieutenant, that I am a member of an association of honest

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persons who have all sworn to distribute among the members half their several gains, whether acquired by dint of intelligence or of force; so that of the ten crowns offered me, five would belong to me only, the other five being the property of the association."

"And what hinders you from keeping the ten, idiot," retorted the constable, "and saying nothing of the good fortune that falls to your share?"

"My word, M. le Connétable. We are too small people, we are, to venture on breaking it."

"Sire," said the constable, "I distrust strongly those people who do things only for money."

Yvonnet bent low before the king.

"I ask your Majesty's leave to say two words."

"Well, upon my word! This rascal has —"

"Constable," said the king, "I beg you —"

Then smiling, —

"Speak, my friend," said he to Yvonnet.

The constable shrugged his shoulders, took three steps backwards, and began to walk backwards and forwards, like a man who does not care to take part in the conversation.

"Sire," said Yvonnet, with a respect and grace that would have done honour to a refined courtier, "I beg your Majesty to remember that I have not fixed any price on the services which I can and ought to render to you as your humble and obedient subject; it was my lieutenant, M. de Théligny, who spoke of ten crowns of gold. Your Majesty being unaware most certainly of the association existing between me and my eight comrades, all equally in the service of M. l'Amiral, I thought it my duty to mention that, while thinking you were giving me eight crowns of gold, you were giving me five only, the other five being for the association. Now that your Majesty deigns to question me, I am ready to answer, and that without there being any question of five or ten or twenty crowns of gold; but purely and simply on account of the respect, obedience, and devotion I owe my king."

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And the adventurer bowed before the king with as much dignity as if he had been the ambassador of an Italian prince or a count of the Holy Empire.

"Nothing could be better!" said the king; "you are quite right, Master Yvonnet. Let us not reckon beforehand and you will find yourself not the worse for it."

Yvonnet smiled in a fashion which meant, "Oh, I know with whom I am dealing."

But as all these little delays irritated the impatient temper of the constable, he turned again to the young man, and, tapping the floor with his foot, said, —

"Look here now, as all your conditions are arranged, will you be so kind as to tell me what you know of Saint-Quentin, you scoundrel?"

Yvonnet looked at the constable, and, with a roguish expression belonging only to the Parisian, said, —

"Saint-Quentin, monseigneur? Saint-Quentin is a city situated on the river Somme, six leagues from Fère, thirteen from Laon, and thirty-four from Paris; it has twenty thousand inhabitants, a corporation composed of twenty-five municipal officers, — namely, a mayor in office, a mayor who has just held office, eleven aldermen, and twelve councillors; these magistrates elect and appoint their own successors, which they select among the bourgeois, in virtue of a decree of the parliament dated the 16th of December, 1335, and of a charter of King Charles VI. dated 1412."

"Ta, ta, ta!" cried the constable, "what the devil is that imp of misfortune dinning us with? I ask you what you know of Saint-Quentin, beast?"

"Well, I have told you what I know, and I can guarantee to you the correctness of my information; I have it from my friend Maldent, who is a native of Noyon, and spent three years in Saint-Quentin as attorney's clerk."

"Hold, sire," said the constable, "believe me, we shall get nothing out of this knave, until we have him on a good wooden horse, with four balls of twelve pounds tied to each leg."

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Yvonnet remained impassive.

"I am not precisely of your opinion, constable. I believe we shall get nothing out of him, as long as we try to force him to speak; but I believe we shall learn all we want to know by leaving him to M. de Théligny. If he knows what he has told us, — just the things he could not be expected to know, — you may be sure he knows something else besides. Is it not true, Master Yvonnet, that you have studied not only the population, geography, and constitution of the city of Saint-Quentin, but that you are also acquainted with the condition of its ramparts and the disposition of its inhabitants?"

"Should my lieutenant wish to interrogate me, or should the king do me the honour to address me the questions to which he desires an answer, I shall do my best to satisfy my lieutenant, and to obey the king."

"The rascal is all honey now!" murmured the constable.

"Come now, my dear Yvonnet," said Théligny, "prove to his Majesty that I have not deceived him when I praised your intelligence so highly, and describe to him, as well as to M. le Connétable, the condition of the ramparts at the present moment."

Yvonnet shook his head.

"Would not one imagine that the knave knows all about it!" growled the constable.

"Sire," replied Yvonnet, without paying any attention to the sneer of Montmorency, "I have the honour to tell your Majesty that the city of Saint-Quentin, ignorant that it runs any danger whatever, and consequently not having prepared any means of defence, is hardly secure from a sudden assault."

"But then," asked the king, "has it not ramparts?"

"Yes, undoubtedly," answered Yvonnet, — "ramparts strengthened by round and square towers connected by curtains with two bastions, one of which defends the suburb of l'Isle; but the boulevard has not even parapets, and is protected only by a fosse dug in front. Its ground-

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plan, which does not rise above the surrounding lands, is commanded in many places by hills in the neighbourhood, and even by houses situated on the border of the exterior fosse; and on the right of the Guise highway and the gate of l'Isle, the old wall — it is the name of the rampart at that point — is so low that a man, be he ever so inactive, could easily scale it."

"But, you scoundrel!" cried the constable, "if you are an engineer, you should say so at once!"

"I am not an engineer, M. le Connétable."

"What are you, then?"

Yvonnet lowered his eyes with affected modesty.

"Yvonnet is in love, monseigneur," said Théligny; "and to reach the fair enslaver who dwells in the Faubourg d'Isle, he has been obliged to study the strong and weak points of the walls."

"Ah," murmured the constable, "a nice reason that, indeed!"

"Well, then, continue," said the king, "and I shall give you a fine gold cross as a present for your mistress the first time you see her on your return."

"And never cross of gold will have shone on a lovelier neck than Gudule's. I may say so with confidence, sire."

"And now this base villain is actually making the portrait of his mistress for us!" said the constable.

"And why not, if she is pretty, my cousin? You shall have the cross, Yvonnet."

"Thanks, sire."

"And now is there a garrison, at least, in the city of Saint-Quentin?"

"No, M. le Connétable."

"No!" cried Montmorency, "and how is that?"

"Because the city is, by its charter, exempt from military occupation, and its defence is confided to the bourgeois themselves, — a right they hold to extremely."

"The bourgeoisie and their rights indeed! Sire, believe

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me, things can never go well as long as the bourgeoisie and the communes claim rights nobody knows of what kind, derived from nobody knows whom!"

"From whom? I am going to tell you, my cousin, from the kings, my predecessors."

"Well, if your Majesty will only intrust me with the task of taking back all these rights from the bourgeoisie, you may rely on it, the thing shall be done quickly enough."

"We shall take thought of this later on, my dear constable. The Spaniards require all our attention at present. We should have a good garrison in Saint-Quentin."

"The admiral was negotiating for that very purpose at the time I left," said Théligny.

"And he must have succeeded by this time," said Yvonnet, "considering that he had Maître Jean Pauquet on his side."

"Who is Maître Jean Pauquet?" demanded the king.

"Gudule's uncle, sire," replied Yvonnet, with an accent that was not exempt from a certain imbecility.

"What, you knave!" cried the constable, "do you make love to a magistrate's niece?"

"Jean Pauquet is not a magistrate, M. le Connétable," replied Yvonnet.

"And what, then, is this Jean Pauquet of yours?"

"The syndic of all the weavers."

"Jesus!" exclaimed Montmorency, "what in the world are we coming to! Compelled to negotiate with a syndic of weavers, when it is the king's good pleasure to place a garrison in one of his cities. You will tell your Jean Pauquet that I intend to have him hanged if he does not open, not only the gates of the city, but the doors of the houses as well, to whatever men-at-arms I choose to send there."

"I think it would be quite as well if you let M. l'Amiral manage the business, M. le Connétable," said Yvonnet, shaking his head; "he knows better than you,

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monseigneur, the way to talk to people like Jean Pauquet."

"I really think you are arguing with me," said Montmorency, with a threatening gesture.

"Cousin, cousin," said Henri, "let us, pray, finish the business we have begun with this brave fellow. You will have it in your power to judge of the truth of his statements, since the army will be under your command, and you are to join it as soon as possible."

"Oh!" said Montmorency, "not later than to-morrow! I am in a hurry to bring all these bourgeois to their senses. A syndic of weavers, *mordieu!* a fine personage to negotiate with an admiral! Peuh!"

And he went to the embrasure of one of the windows and began gnawing his nails.

"Now," asked the king, "are the approaches to the city easy?"

"On three sides, yes, sire: on the Faubourg d'Isle side, the Rémicourt side, and the chapel of Épargnemaille side; but on the Tourival side it is necessary to cross the Grosnard marshes, which are full of places where you have no chance once you sink."

The constable had approached to listen to this detail, which interested him.

"In case of need, would you undertake," he said, "to guide across the marsh a body of troops that could enter or leave the city?"

"Doubtless; but I have already told M. le Connétable that Maldent, one of our associates, would do his business better, having lived three years in Saint-Quentin, while I have gone there only at night, and then by the speediest route."

"And why speediest?"

"Because when I am alone at night, I am afraid."

"How!" cried Montmorency, "you are afraid?"

"Certainly, I am afraid."

"And you confess it, you rascal?"

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"Why not, since it is true?"

"And what are you afraid of?"

"I am afraid of the will-o'-the-wisps, the ghosts, and the *loups-garoux*."

The constable burst out laughing.

"Ah, you are afraid of the will-o'-the-wisps, the ghosts, and the *loups-garoux?*"

"Oh, yes, I am horribly nervous!"

And the young man shivered.

"Ah, my dear Théligny," said Montmorency, "I compliment you on your squire! I am warned; I don't care to have him for a night guide."

"In fact, it would be better to employ me by day."

"And leave you the night to see your Gudule, eh?"

"You see, monseigneur, that my visits have not been useless, and the king thinks as much, since he has graciously promised me a cross."

"M. de Montmorency, let forty gold crowns be given to this young man for the excellent information he has afforded us and the service he has offered to render. You will add ten crowns besides to buy a cross for Mademoiselle Gudule."

The constable shrugged his shoulders.

"Forty crowns!" he grumbled; "forty lashes of a whip! forty strokes of a cane! forty blows of the butt-end of a halberd on his shoulders!"

"You hear me, cousin; my word is pledged. Do not make me break my word."

Then to Théligny, —

"M. de Théligny," continued the king, "the constable will give orders to have you supplied with horses from my stables at the Louvre and Compiègne, so that you may march as quickly as possible. Do not be afraid of laming them, and try to reach La Fère before to-morrow. M. de Châtillon cannot be warned too soon that war is declared. A good journey, monsieur, and good luck!"

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The lieutenant and his squire saluted the king respectfully and followed the constable.

Ten minutes afterwards they were galloping on the road from Paris, and the constable went back to the king, who had not left his cabinet.

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V.

IN WHICH THE READER FINDS HIMSELF AGAIN IN A COUNTRY HE KNOWS SOMETHING OF.

Henri II. was waiting for the constable, in order to give orders of the highest importance without any delay.

M. de Montgomery, who had, some years before, led French troops to the aid of the regent of Scotland, was sent to Edinburgh to ask that, in pursuance of the treaty signed between that kingdom and France, the Scotch should declare war on England, and that the lords composing the council of the regency should send to France ambassadors empowered to conclude the marriage between the young Queen Mary and the dauphin.

At the same time an instrument was drawn up with the consent of the Guises, by which Mary Stuart transmitted to the King of France her realm of Scotland and all the rights she had or might have over that of England, in case she died without male heir.

As soon as the marriage was celebrated, Mary Stuart was to take the title of Queen of France, Scotland, and England. Meanwhile, the triple arms of France, Scotland, and England were engraved on the plate of the young sovereign.

In the evening, as the king had said, there was a splendid fête in the château of Saint-Germain, and the two heralds on their return to their respective princes might tell in what joyous fashion declarations of war were received at the court of France.

But before the first window of the château was illuminated, two cavaliers, mounted on magnificent steeds, were galloping out of the courts of the Louvre, and, after gain-

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ing the Barrière de la Villette, dashed along the La Fère highway.

At Louvres, they stopped a moment to breathe their horses, which they changed at Compiègne, as had been agreed on; after which, in spite of the advanced hour of the night and their want of rest, they resumed their journey and started at a gallop for La Fère, which they entered at eight in the morning.

Nothing fresh had occurred since the departure of Théligny and Yvonnet.

Short as was the time the latter had spent at Paris, he had found an opportunity to renew his wardrobe at the shop of a ready-made clothier of his acquaintance, who did business in the Rue Prêtres Saint-Germain l'Auxerrois. The jacket and maroon breeches had then given place to doublet and hose of green velvet embroidered with gold, and a cherry-coloured cap adorned with a white plume. A sash of the same colour as the cap was wrapped round him, with the ends stuffed into boots that were almost irreproachable, armed with gigantic copper spurs. If his new garb was not quite fresh, it had at least been so little worn and by so careful an owner that only persons of very bad taste would make any uncalled for remarks on it or perceive that it came from a ready-made outfitter's, and not from a tailor's workshop. As to the chain, Yvonnet concluded, after deep thought, it had still enough gilding on it to deceive those looking at it from a distance of a few yards.

It was his look-out to see that they had no nearer view.

Let us hasten to add that the gold cross had been conscientiously purchased; only no one ever knew whether Yvonnet had employed equally conscientiously the whole of the ten crowns given him by Henri II. for that purpose, in making the purchase for the niece of Jean Pauquet.

Our belief is that Yvonnet had clipped enough from that cross to provide himself, not only with the doublet and green velvet breeches, the cherry-coloured cap, and white plume, the buffalo-leather boots and copper spurs, but also

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with an elegant cuirass placed in a portmanteau on the croup of his horse, and which rattled in quite a warlike fashion with every motion of the horse.

But it must be said that, as all this had for aim to defend or adorn his person, and as his person belonged to Mademoiselle Gudule, the fact that Yvonnet thus used the clippings of his mistress's cross, would by no means show that the money of King Henri II. had been turned from its destination.

For that matter, he no sooner cleared the gate of La Fère than he was able to judge of the effect produced by his new outfit. Franz and Heinrich Scharfenstein were, in their capacity as purveyors of the association, busy leading to the camp an ox they had just acquired; and with that instinct of self-preservation which makes animals object to being butchered, the ox was refusing to proceed, — as far as in him lay; for Heinrich Scharfenstein was dragging him by a horn, while Franz was pushing him behind.

At the noise of the horse's hoofs on the pavement, Heinrich raised his head, and recognising our squire, —

"Oh, Franz!" he cried, "only look at Meinherr Yvonnet; is n't he beautiful?"

And in his admiration, he let go the horn of the ox, which, profiting by his liberty, swung round, and would have regained his stall, if Franz, who, as we have said, was stationed in the neighbourhood of the tail, had not seized that member, and, stiffening all his sinews, brought the animal to a sudden stand by his herculean strength.

Yvonnet sent him a protecting salute with his hand, and passed on.

They arrived at Coligny's quarters.

The young lieutenant was recognised, and entered the cabinet of the admiral at once, followed by Yvonnet, who, with his habitual tact and in spite of the change wrought in his exterior, remained respectfully at the door.

M. de Châtillon, leaning over one of those imperfect

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maps made at that period, was trying to complete it by the information a man in front of him, with cunning features, pointed nose, and intelligent eyes, was giving him.

This man was our friend the Picard Maldent, who, as Yvonnet had said, having been an attorney's clerk in Saint-Quentin for three years, knew the city and its environs as well as his writing-desk.

Coligny, at the noise made by Théligny on entering, raised his head, and recognised his messenger.

Maldent gently turned his eyes towards the door, and recognised Yvonnet.

The admiral offered his hand to Théligny; Maldent exchanged a look with Yvonnet, who drew the strings of the upper orifice of a purse from his pocket to indicate that his journey had not been wholly unprofitable.

Théligny gave an account to Coligny in a few words of his interview with the king and M. le Connétable, and handed to the governor of Picardy the letters of his uncle.

"Yes," said Coligny, reading, "my opinion has been the same as his: Saint-Quentin is, in fact, the city to be guarded above all. So your company, my dear Theligny, has gone there yesterday. You will join to-day even, and announce my speedy arrival."

And, absorbed in the information given him by Maldent, he bent anew over the map, and continued his annotations.

Théligny knew the admiral, — a man of deep and serious thought, who must be let do what he was doing; and, as according to all probability, when his notes were finished, Coligny would have further orders to give him with respect to Saint-Quentin, the lieutenant approached Yvonnet.

"Go and wait for me in the camp," he whispered, "I will take you up on my way, when I have received the final instructions of M. l'Amiral."

Yvonnet bowed silently and went out. He found his horse at the door, and in an instant was outside the city.

The camp of Coligny, placed first at Pierrepont near

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Marle, had been afterwards transported near La Fère. Too weak to hold his ground in an open country with the fifteen or eighteen hundred men he commanded, the admiral, fearing a surprise, had gained the neighbourhood of a fortified city, believing that, small as his army was, it could make a stand behind good walls.

The line of the camp passed, Yvonnet stood up on his spurs to try if he could recognise any of his companions, and find out where they had fixed their quarters.

Soon his gaze was attracted by a group, in the middle of which was a man who looked like Procope, seated on a stone and writing on one knee.

Procope had utilised his clerical knowledge; from the moment it became certain that the enemy would be soon encountered, he was busy drawing up wills at five sous each.

Yvonnet understood that the quondam usher was like M. de Coligny, and did not fancy being disturbed in his grave occupation.

He cast another look around him, and perceived Franz and Heinrich Scharfenstein, who, having given up the design of leading their ox to the camp, had tied its legs together, and were carrying it thither, with the help of the pole of a carriage, the extremities of which rested on each of their shoulders.

A man who was no other than Pilletrousse was making signs to them at the door of a tent in rather good condition.

Yvonnet recognised the domicile in which he had the right to a ninth part, and in a few seconds was beside Pilletrousse, who, before giving any sign of welcome to his companion, walked round him once, then twice, then for the third time, Yvonnet, like the cavalier of an equestrian statue, looking on with a smile of satisfaction as his companion accomplished this circumambulation.

After the third turn, Pilletrousse halted, and with a clacking of the tongue to denote his admiration, —

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"*Peste!*" said he, "that is a pretty horse, and well worth forty gold crowns. Where the devil did you steal it?"

"Hush!" said Yvonnet, "speak with respect of the animal; he comes from his Majesty's stables, and only belongs to me as a loan."

"That 's rather annoying," said Pilletrousse.

"And why so?"

"Because I had a purchaser."

"Ah!" returned Yvonnet, "and who was your purchaser?"

"I," said a voice behind Yvonnet.

Yvonnet turned round and cast a quick glance upon the person presenting himself with this haughty monosyllable, which was to make the success of the tragedy of "Medea," a hundred years later.

The bidder for the horse was a young man of from twenty-three to twenty-four years, half armed, half unarmed, as was the fashion with men of war when in camp.

Yvonnet needed only to let his eyes fall on those square shoulders, on that head framed in a red beard and red hair, on those clear blue eyes full of obstinacy and ferocity, to recognise the speaker.

"You have just heard my answer," he replied. "The horse, in reality, belongs to his Majesty the King of France, who has had the goodness to lend it to me for my return to the camp; if he claims it, I must of course give it back to him; if he leaves it with me, it is at your disposal, the price, it is unnecessary to say, being discussed and arranged beforehand between us."

"I admit the justice of what you say," replied the gentleman; "keep it for me, then. I am rich and disposed to be liberal."

Yvonnet saluted.

"Besides," continued the gentleman, "it is not the only affair concerning which I should wish to treat with you."

Yvonnet and Pilletrousse saluted together.

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"What is the number of your band?"

"Of our troop, you mean, monsieur," retorted Yvonnet, a little hurt by the epithet.

"Of your troop, if you like it better."

"Unless in my absence some of my comrades have been unfortunate," answered Yvonnet, with a questioning glance at Pilletrousse, "there ought to be nine."

A look of Pilletrousse reassured Yvonnet, even supposing that he was really anxious on the subject.

"And all brave?" asked the gentleman.

Yvonnet smiled; Pilletrousse shrugged his shoulders.

"The fact is, you have a pretty sample there," said the gentleman, pointing to Franz and Heinrich, "if these two are members of your troop."

"They are," replied Pilletrousse, laconically.

"Then we can treat —"

"Pardon," said Yvonnet; "but we belong to M. l'Amiral."

"Except on two days of the week, when we can work on our own account," observed Pilletrousse. "Procope, foreseeing the two cases, introduced these clauses into the agreement: first, when we have some enterprise to undertake on our own behalf; second, when some honourable gentleman makes us a proposal of the kind the gentleman here present seems disposed to make."

"I only want you for a single day or for a single night; so nothing could be better. Now, in case of need, where shall I find you?"

"At Saint-Quentin, probably," said Yvonnet; "I know that I shall be there in person this very day."

"And two of us," continued Procope, "Lactance and Malemort, are there already. As to the rest of the troop —"

"As to the rest of the troop," interrupted Yvonnet, "they are sure to follow us there, as, from what I heard M. l'Amiral say, he will be there himself in two or three days."

"Well," said the gentleman, "at Saint-Quentin, my braves!"

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"At Saint-Quentin, monsieur."

The latter made a slight motion of the head and retired.

Yvonnet followed him with his eyes until he was lost in the crowd; then, calling a vagabond who attended to the wants of the associates, and received therefor his temporal and spiritual nourishment, he threw him the reins of his horse.

The first intention of Yvonnet had been to approach Pilletrousse, and make him a confidant of his reminiscences in connection with the unknown; but, doubtless considering him of too material an organisation for the reception of a secret of such importance, he drove back the words which were already on the tip of his tongue, and appeared to be giving his attention wholly to the work Franz and Heinrich were accomplishing.

Heinrich and Franz, after having, as we have said, with the help of the carriage-pole, which they had passed between the four legs, brought their recalcitrant ox up to the middle of the camp even, had deposited him in front of their tent.

Then Heinrich entered the tent to fetch his mace, which he had some difficulty in finding, Fracasso, seized with a fit of poetic inspiration, having thrown himself on a mattress, in order to dream at his ease, and having made of this mace a pillow to support his head.

This mace, simple in form and humble in material, was merely a ball twelve pounds in weight fitted to an iron bar; it was, with a gigantic two-handed sword, the usual weapon of the two Scharfensteins.

Heinrich at last found it, and, in spite of the groans of Fracasso, whom he came on in the full fire of composition, he dragged it from under his head, and returned to join Franz, who was waiting for him.

Hardly had Franz untied the forelegs of the ox, when the animal made a sudden effort and half rose. This was Heinrich's opportunity; he raised the iron mace until, bending backwards, it touched his loins, and, with all his strength, struck it between the two horns of the ox.

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The animal, which had begun to bellow, stopped, and fell as if thunderstruck.

Pilletrousse, who, with flaming eyes and like a dog in leash, was only awaiting the moment, rushed upon the prostrate animal and opened the artery of the neck. After which, he clove him from the lower lip to the opposite extremity, and proceeded to cut him up.

Pilletrousse was the butcher of the association; Heinrich and Franz, the purveyors, bought and killed the animal, whatever it might be. Pilletrousse flayed it, divided it, and laid apart the best pieces for the association; in a sort of stall at some distance from the common tent, adorned with all the art of which he was a master, the different pieces of which he wished to get rid. Now, Pilletrousse was so adroit a carver, and so clever a merchant, that it rarely happened but, during the two or three days of the sale, he drew from this part of the animal a few crowns more than it cost.

All this was to the profit of the association, which, as may be seen, could not fare badly as long as it was seconded by each of its members as it was by such of its members as we have passed in review.

The cutting up was over, and the public sale was commencing, when a cavalier made his appearance in the midst of the crowd which thronged around the stall of Maître Pilletrousse, and which was buying — each according to his means — everything, from the fillet to the tripes.

This cavalier was Théligny, who, having been furnished with letters from the admiral for the mayor, the governor of the city, and Jean Pauquet, syndic of the weavers, was come in search of his squire Yvonnet.

He also brought news that as soon as M. de Coligny had assembled the troops expected by him, and had spoken with his uncle, M. le Connétable, he would set out with five or six hundred men for Saint-Quentin.

Maldent, Procope, Fracasso, Pilletrousse, and the two Scharfensteins would form part of the garrison, and would

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join Malemort and Lactance in the city, who were there already, and Yvonnet, who, as he would start with M. de Théligny, would be there in two or three hours.

The adieux were short, Fracasso not having yet finished his sonnet, and seeking a rhyme for the verb *perdre*, which he could not find; the two Scharfensteins, while very fond of Yvonnet, being of a very undemonstrative nature; and, in fine, Pilletrousse contenting himself with saying to the young man, with a grasp of the hand, so busy was he with his sale, —

"Try to keep the horse!"

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VI.

SAINT-QUENTIN.

As Yvonnet had said to M. le Connétable, it is six leagues from La Fère to Saint-Quentin.

The horses had already made a long journey the night before, and that without any other halt than an hour spent at Noyon.

They had now had a rest of two hours, it is true; still, as there was no occasion to hurry, except the desire of Yvonnet to see Gudule again, they spent nearly three hours in making the six leagues that separated them from the term of their ride.

At last, after clearing the exterior boulevard, after leaving on the right the Guise highway, which bifurcates a hundred yards from the old wall, after making themselves known at the gate and plunging under the vault beneath the rampart, the two cavaliers found themselves in the Faubourg d'Isle.

"Monsieur, will you be kind enough to give me leave for ten minutes," asked Yvonnet, "or would you like, by turning aside a few steps, to get some news of what is passing in the city?"

"Ah, ah!" laughed Théligny, "it would appear we are in the neighbourhood of Mademoiselle Gudule's dwelling?"

"You are right, monsieur," said Yvonnet.

"Is there any indiscretion in—?" asked Théligny.

"Not the least in the world," answered Yvonnet. "In the daytime, I am a mere acquaintance of Mademoiselle Gudule, exchanging a word and a salute with her. It has always been my principle not to do anything to injure the future prospects of fair young girls."

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And, turning to the right, he advanced into a little lane, bordered on one side by a long garden wall, and on the other by several houses, one of which was pierced by a window entirely framed in creeping plants.

Rising on his spurs, Yvonnet reached exactly to the window, beneath which stood a pillar, calculated to give pedestrians the same advantage, for love or business, which Yvonnet derived from being on horseback.

The moment he arrived, the window was opened as if by magic, and a charming face, all rosy with delight, appeared in the midst of the flowers.

"Ah, it is you, Gudule!" said Yvonnet; "how did you guess my arrival?"

"I did not guess it; I was at my other window that looks upon the road to La Fère. I saw two horsemen in the distance, and although it never occurred to me that you might be one of them, I could not keep my eyes off these travellers. When you came to a certain point I recognised you. Then I ran here, all trembling with fear, for I dreaded you might pass without stopping, — first, because you were not alone, and next, because you are so handsome I feared you might have reached such fortune that you would think of me no longer."

"The person I have the honour to accompany, my dear Gudule, and who has given me permission to converse with you a moment, is M. de Théligny, my lieutenant; he will soon have some questions to put to you, as well as I, on the state of the city."

Gudule cast a timid glance upon the lieutenant, who made a gentle inclination to her, to which the young girl replied by a "God preserve you, monseigneur!" uttered with much emotion.

"As to the costume in which you see me, Gudule," continued Yvonnet, "it is the result of the king's liberality, who has even, on learning that I had the happiness to know you, deigned to charge me to present you, in his name, with this fine gold cross."

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And, at the same time, he drew the cross from his pocket, and offered it to Gudule, who, hesitating to accept it, cried, —

"What are you talking about, Yvonnet? and why do you make sport of a poor girl?"

"I do not make sport of you in any way, Gudule, and here is my lieutenant, who will tell you that what I affirm is the truth."

"In fact," said Théligny, "I was present, my fair child, when the king charged Yvonnet to make this present."

"You are acquainted with the king, then?" asked Gudule, quite astounded.

"Since yesterday, and since yesterday the king is acquainted with you, Gudule, as well as with your worthy uncle, Jean Pauquet, for whom my lieutenant has a letter from M. l'Amiral."

The lieutenant made a further sign of assent; and Gudule, who, as we have said, at first hesitated, now passed her trembling hand through the flowers, — a hand which Yvonnet kissed as he placed the cross in it.

Théligny, approaching, then said, —

"And now, my dear M. Yvonnet, will you please ask Gudule where her uncle is, and in what disposition we are likely to find him?"

"My uncle is at the Town Hall, monseigneur," said Gudule, who could hardly keep her eyes away from the cross, "and I think well disposed to defend the city."

"Thanks, my fair child. Come away, Yvonnet."

Gudule made a little sign of entreaty, and blushing up to the whites of her eyes, —

"Then, monseigneur," said she, "if my father asks me where this cross came from —"

"You may tell him it comes from his Majesty," returned the young officer, smiling, who understood the alarm of Gudule; "that it has been given by the king in recognition of the good services which your uncle Jean and your

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father Guillaume have rendered him, and are still likely to render him. In fine, if you do not wish — as is very possible — to name M. Yvonnet, you will add that it is I, Théligny, lieutenant in the company of the dauphin, who have brought you this cross."

"Oh, thanks, thanks!" all joyous, and clapping her hands together; "but for this, I would never dare to wear it."

Then in quick low tones to Yvonnet, —

"When shall I see you again?" she asked.

"When I was three or four leagues from you, Gudule, you saw me every night," replied Yvonnet; "judge how often you must see me when I am living in the same city."

"Hush!" said Gudule.

Then lower still, —

"Come early," she said; "I think my father will pass the whole night at the Town Hall."

She withdrew her head, and disappeared behind the curtain of verdure and flowers.

The young men followed the causeway between the Somme and the fountain La Ferrée. Halfway on the route, they turned from the abbey and church of Saint-Quentin-en-Isle, and crossed the first bridge, which led to the chapel in which the relics of the holy martyr were to be discovered, then a second bridge, which brought them to the strait of Saint-Pierre, and at last a third bridge which, after it was cleared, placed them in front of the two towers flanking the gate of Isle.

The gate was guarded by a soldier of Théligny's regiment and by a bourgeois of the city.

This time Théligny had no trouble in getting himself recognised; it was the soldier who came to him to ask him for news. People were saying that the enemy was very near; and this little company of a hundred and fifty men found itself somewhat isolated in the midst of all these bourgeois who were running right and left, frightened out of their wits, and who were losing their time in discus-

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sions at the meetings in the Town Hall, — meetings at which there was indeed much discussion, but very little action.

Besides this, Saint-Quentin seemed to be a prey to frightful disorder. The principal artery — which cuts the city for two-thirds of its length, and into which, like the affluents of a great river, ran, on the right, the Rue Wager, the Rue des Cordeliers, the Rue d'Issenghien, the Rue des Ligniers, and on the left, the Rue des Corbeaux, the Rue de la Truie-qui-file and the Rue des Brebis — was thronged with people; and this multitude, become denser still on the Rue de la Sellerie, was packed so close on the great square that, as far as our cavaliers were concerned, it was like a wall almost impossible to break through.

Still, when Yvonnet placed his cap on the end of his sword, and standing in his stirrups, shouted, "Make way! make way for the people of M. l'Amiral!" the crowd, hoping they were coming to announce a reinforcement, made such violent efforts to open a path that at last the two cavaliers were able to start from the church of Saint-Jacques and reach the steps of the Town Hall, at the top of which was the mayor, Messire Varlet de Gibercourt.

They had arrived at an opportune moment. A meeting had just been held; and, thanks to the patriotism of the inhabitants, roused to fury by the eloquence of Maître Jean Pauquet and his brother Guillaume, it had been unanimously resolved that the city of Saint-Quentin, faithful to its king and relying on its holy patron, would defend itself to the last extremity.

The news brought by Théligny, that the admiral was approaching with a reinforcement, raised the enthusiasm to the very highest pitch.

The citizens, at the very moment and without leaving the spot, organised themselves into companies which named their own leaders. Each company contained fifty men.

The mayor opened the arsenal of the Town Hall; unfortunately it was very poorly furnished. Only fifteen can-

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non were found in it, some in a very bad condition, and fifteen ordinary arquebuses and twenty-one arquebuses *à croc;* but there was quite an abundance of halberds and pikes.

Jean Pauquet was named captain of one of those companies, and Guillaume, his brother, lieutenant in another. So we see that honours were raining on this family, but these honours were dangerous.

The sum total of the troops consisted then of a hundred and twenty or a hundred and thirty men of the Dauphin's Company, commanded by Théligny; a hundred men or thereabouts, of the company of M. de Breuil, governor of Saint-Quentin, which arrived eight days ago from Abbeville, and two hundred bourgeois organised into four companies of fifty men each. Three of these companies were composed of arbalétriers, pikemen, and halberdiers; the fourth was armed with arquebuses.

Suddenly a fifth was seen to appear, which was not expected, and, because of its unexpected appearance and the elements forming it, created boundless enthusiasm.

It arrived by the Rue Croix-Belle-Porte, and consisted of a hundred Jacobin monks, all carrying pikes or halberds.

A man, covered with a robe, under which might be seen a coat of mail, led them, with a naked sword in his hand.

Hearing the shouts raised as they passed, Yvonnet turned round, and, looking attentively at their captain, "May the devil burn me," he said, "if it is not Lactance!"

In fact, it was Lactance. Foreseeing that a tough struggle was in prospect, he had retired among the Jacobins of the Rue des Rosiers, in order to do penance, and put himself, as far as possible, in a state of grace. The good fathers received him with open arms, and Lactance, although wholly devoted to the task of confessing and communicating, still remarked their patriotism, and thought it would not be a bad thing to utilise it. As a result of his cogitations, he imparted to them, as an inspi-

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ration from heaven, the idea that came to him of forming them into a military company; the proposal was favourably received. The prior consented to take an hour from Matins, and half an hour from Vespers, and devote the time to drilling; and, at the end of three days, Lactance, judging the monks sufficiently practised in military manœuvres, had drawn them from the convent, and, as we have said, had led them to the square of the Town Hall, amid the acclamations of the multitude.

Saint-Quentin could therefore reckon, for the moment, on a hundred and twenty men of the Dauphin's Company, on a hundred men of the company of the governor of the city, on two hundred bourgeois, and a hundred Jacobin monks, — in all, five hundred and twenty combatants.

Hardly had the mayor, governor, and the other magistrates of the city inspected their forces, when loud cries rose from the ramparts, and people were seen arrriving along the Rue de l'Orfèverie and the Rue Saint-André, who were lifting their arms to heaven in a despairing fashion.

After numberless inquiries and questions, it was learned that an immense number of peasants had been seen running along the plain which stretches from Homblières to Mesnil-Saint-Laurent, pushing through the harvest fields, and exhibiting, as far as could be judged at the distance they were still from the city, undoubted evidences of terror.

That very moment the gates were ordered to be closed, and the ramparts manned.

Lactance, who, in the thick of dangers, always preserved the coolness of a true Christian, immediately ordered his Jacobins to harness themselves to the cannon, and plant eight of them on the wall extending from the gate of Isle to the tower of Dameuse, two on the wall of the Vieux-Marché, three on the wall between the Grosse Tour and the postern of the Petit Pont, and two on the old wall at the Faubourg d'Isle.

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Théligny and Yvonnet, who were on horseback, and who felt that, in spite of their terrible ride of the evening before, their steeds were still sound in wind and limb, issued forth through the Rémicourt gate, forded the river, and dashed across the plain to learn what was the cause of the flight of all these people.

The first individual they met was supporting his nose and a part of his cheek with his right hand, trying, as well as he could, to keep these two precious objects in their place, and, at the same time, making eager signs with his right to Yvonnet.

Yvonnet rode towards him, and recognised Malemort.

"Ah!" howled the latter, with all the strength of his lungs, "to arms! to arms!"

Yvonnet redoubled his pace, and, seeing his comrade streaming with blood, he jumped on the ground, and examined his wound.

It would have been terrible from the ravages it would have made on a virgin countenance; but the face of Malemort had been so terribly carved already that a gash more or less did not count.

Yvonnet made four folds of his handkerchief, with a hole in the centre to give passage to the nose of Malemort; then, having laid the patient on the ground and placed the wounded head on his knee, he bandaged the face so lightly and so adroitly that the ablest surgeon could not have done better.

During this time Théligny was picking up information. This is what had happened: —

In the morning the enemy appeared in sight of Origny-Sainte-Benoîte. Malemort, who happened to be there, having, with his usual instinct, scented that there would be a good many blows struck in that quarter, had excited the inhabitants to resistance. They had consequently retired into the castle with all the arms and war supplies they could gather. There they held out for nearly four hours. But the castle, being attacked by the whole van of the

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Spanish army, was carried by assault. Malemort did wonders; however, it became at last necessary to retreat. Pressed too closely by three or four Spaniards, he stabbed one, knocked down another; but while he was attacking the third, the fourth struck at his face sideways, making an awful gash a little below the eyes. Malemort, understanding how impossible it was to defend himself with a wound that blinded him, gave a loud cry, and fell backwards, as if he had been suddenly killed. The Spaniards searched him, and took three or four sous parisis, which he happened to have about him, and went back to their companions, who were engaged in a more profitable kind of plundering. Thereupon Malemort rose, set back his nose and cheek in their natural places, did his best to keep them there with his hand, and directed his course to the city to give the alarm.

And this was why Malemort, ordinarily the first to attack and the last to retreat, found himself this time, contrary to all his habits, at the head of the fugitives.

Théligny and Yvonnet had learned all they wanted to learn. Yvonnet took Malemort up behind him, and all three entered the city, crying, "To arms!"

The entire city was awaiting their return. In an instant it was known that the enemy was only four or five leagues distant; but such was the resolution of the inhabitants that this news, so far from depressing, stimulated them.

Luckily, among the men brought by M. de Breuil were found fifty gunners; to them were assigned the fifteen cannon drawn by the Jacobin brothers to the ramparts. Three attendants were required for each; the monks offered to complete the batteries, and were accepted. After an hour's practice, a spectator would have fancied they had never done anything else in their lives.

It was time, for at the end of an hour the first Spanish columns came in sight.

The Town Council resolved to send a courier to the

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admiral to warn him of the situation; but no one wished to leave the city at the moment of danger.

Yvonnet proposed Malemort.

Malemort uttered loud cries: since his wound was attended to, he felt, he said, much livelier than ever before; it was fifteen months since he had a real good fight. The blood was choking him, and the little he had lost was a great relief to him.

But Yvonnet observed to him that he would have a horse; that he would be allowed to keep this horse; that in two or three days he would return in the suite of Coligny, and that, thanks to this horse, he would be able, during the sorties that would take place, to advance farther than if he was on foot.

This last consideration decided Malemort.

We may add that, in addition to this, Yvonnet had that influence over Malemort which weak, nervous natures always have over powerful ones.

Malemort mounted horse, and galloped in the direction of La Fère.

Those who remained behind might be tranquil; at the gait the adventurer rode at, the admiral would be warned in less than an hour and a half.

Meanwhile, the gates were thrown open to receive the poor inhabitants of Origny-Sainte-Benoîte, and all in the city were eager in their offers of hospitality. Then persons were sent into all the surrounding villages — Harly, Rémicourt, La Chapelle, Rocourt, and Abbiette — to requisition all the flour and grain that could be found in them.

The enemy advanced on an immense line, and on a depth that led the garrison to fancy it would have to deal with the entire Spanish, German, and Walloon army; that is to say, with fifty or sixty thousand men.

Just as when the lava descends from the crater of Etna or Vesuvius, the houses crumble, and the trees are on fire before the torrent of flame reaches them, so, in front of all this black line which was advancing, houses might be

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seen disappearing in a blaze, and villages in a state of conflagration.

The entire population gazed on this spectacle from the height of the rampart of Rémicourt, from the galleries of the collegial church, which commands the city, from the summit of the tower of Saint-Jean, from the Red Tower, and the tower of L'Eau; and at every fresh blaze a concert of curses arose, and seemed, like to a cloud of ill-omened birds, to take flight and settle down upon the enemy.

But the enemy was advancing for all that, chasing away the people before them, as the wind was chasing the smoke of the conflagrations. During some time the gates of the city continued to receive the fugitives; but they were soon obliged to shut them, the enemy being so near.

And then the poor peasants belonging to the burning villages might be seen trying to pass by the city, to find a refuge at Vermand, Pontru, and Caulaincourt.

Soon the drums beat again.

It was a signal for all non-combatants to quit the ramparts and the towers.

At last none remained along the entire line but the combatants, silent and taciturn, as men always are when gathered together to meet a danger.

The vanguard could now be perfectly distinguished. It was composed of pistoliers, who, having crossed the Somme between Rouvroy and Harly, spread swiftly over all the circumference of the city, occupying the approaches to the gates of Rémicourt, Saint-Jean, and Ponthoille.

Behind the pistoliers, three or four thousand men, who might be recognised from the regularity of their march as belonging to those old Spanish bands reputed to be the best troops in the world, passed the Somme in their turn, and marched in the direction of the Faubourg d'Isle.

"I have every reason to believe, my dear Yvonnet," said Théligny, "that the music will begin on the side of the house of your charmer. If you like to see how the tune is played, come with me."

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"Very willingly, lieutenant," said Yvonnet, who felt those nervous shudders passing through his body which, in his case, was always the sign of an approaching battle.

And, with lips closely pressed and cheeks slightly pale, he proceeded towards the gate of Isle, where Théligny was leading nearly the half of his men, leaving the rest to support the citizens and, at need, show them an example.

We shall see later on that it was the citizens who showed the soldiers the example, instead of receiving it from them.

They arrived at the Faubourg d'Isle. Yvonnet got a hundred steps in front, and had time to tap at the window of Gudule, who ran up all in a tremble, and to advise the young girl to descend into the lower apartments, seeing that it was not unlikely the balls would play at shuttlecock with the chimneys of the houses. He had not finished, when, as if to support his words, a ball passed swiftly with a hiss, and overturned a gable whose pieces fell like a shower of aerolites around the young man.

Yvonnet leaped from the street on the post in front of the house, clung with both hands to the sill of the window, and, seeking amid the flowers for the trembling lips of the young girl, imprinted a very tender kiss on them, and then fell back into the street.

"Should any misfortune happen to me, do not forget me too quick," said he; "and if you forget me, don't let it be for a Spaniard or a German or an Englishman!"

And, without waiting for the assurance the young girl was about to give that she would love him always, he took his way to the old wall and found himself behind the parapet, a few steps from the spot he was accustomed to scale during his nocturnal rambles.

As had been foreseen by Théligny, who did not, in fact, arrive on the scene of battle until after his squire, it was there the music was beginning.

The music was noisy, and made the heads that heard it bend more than once; but gradually the bourgeois, who

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had at first supplied food for laughter to the soldiers, grew accustomed to it, and then became more furious than the others.

However, the Spaniards came on in such increasing numbers that the bourgeois were forced to abandon the exterior boulevard, which they had at first attempted to defend, but which, without a parapet, and commanded by the neighbouring heights, soon became no longer tenable. Protected by the two pieces of cannon, and by the arquebusiers of the old wall, they accomplished their retreat in good order, leaving three killed, but carrying off their wounded.

Yvonnet was dragging along a Spaniard, through whose body he had passed his sword, and whose arquebuse he had taken; but as he had not had leisure to take, at the same time, the cartridges hanging from the baldrick of the dead man, he was drawing him aside, hoping that his trouble would not be lost, and that the pockets might be as well furnished as the baldrick.

This confidence was rewarded: besides their three months' pay, distributed to the Spaniards the evening before to give them courage, each of them had appropriated a fair share of plunder during the five or six days they held the country. We cannot say whether Yvonnet's Spaniard had appropriated more or less than the others; but, after visiting his pockets, Yvonnet appeared very well satisfied with what he found there.

Behind the soldiers of Théligny and the bourgeois of the city, the two Spanish leaders, named Julian Romeron and Carondelet, took possession of the exterior boulevard, as well as of all the houses lining the causeway of Guise and of La Fère. These formed what was called the Haut Faubourg; but when they tried to clear the space between the exterior boulevard and the old wall, they were received with such a well-directed fire that they had to regain the houses, from the windows of which they continued firing until the darkness of night put an end to the encounter.

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It was only then that Yvonnet judged it proper to turn round his head. Then, ten paces in his rear, he saw the pale face of a charming young girl, who, under the pretence of making sure that her father was there, had, in spite of the prohibition, encroached on the ground of the combatants.

His eyes glanced from the young girl to his lieutenant.

"My dear M. Yvonnet," said the latter, "you have been fighting or riding now two days; you must be tired. Leave to others, then, the task of watching on the ramparts, and try to get a good, pleasant rest until to-morrow. You will find me where there is firing."

Yvonnet did not need to be told twice. He saluted his lieutenant, gave a meaning glance at Gudule, and then started for the causeway, as if intending to go into the city.

But, mistaking his way, doubtless on account of the darkness, he strayed into the suburbs; for, ten minutes later, he was in that little lane, in front of that little window, and with one foot on that post from the top of which so many things could be done.

What Yvonnet did was to cling to two little white hands, which had quickly passed through that little window, and drew him so skilfully and adroitly inside that it was easy to see it was not the first time they were employed in this exercise.

The things we have just related occurred on the 2d of August, 1557.

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VII.

THE ADMIRAL KEEPS HIS WORD.

As might easily be foreseen, Malemort made quickly the six leagues that separated Saint-Quentin from the camp of La Fère.

Before an hour and a half had elapsed, he was at the door of M. l'Amiral.

Although any one who witnessed the arrival of this man, after such a headlong gallop, his clothes covered with blood, his face with bandages, would have found it impossible to recognise Malemort under a mask that concealed everything but the eyes and mouth, yet it was easy to recognise in him a messenger of bad news.

He was, therefore, on the very instant introduced to Coligny.

The admiral was with his uncle; the constable had just arrived.

Malemort related the capture of Origny-Sainte-Benoîte, the massacre of those who tried to defend the castle, the burning of all the villages on the line of march of the Spanish army, whose passage left a track of fire and smoke behind it.

On the instant the uncle and nephew arranged their two courses of action.

Coligny, with five or six hundred men, would set out at once for Saint-Quentin, would shut himself up in the city, and hold out to the last extremity.

The constable, with the rest of the soldiers in the camp, would join the army of the Duc de Nevers, whose force amounted to only eight or nine thousand men, and who was

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too weak, consequently, to attack the Spanish army, amounting to more than fifty thousand, but would watch and harass it, and be always ready to profit by its mistakes.

This little troop manœuvred on the confines of the Lyonnais and the Thiérache.

The admiral immediately ordered the signal to saddle to be sounded, and the drums to beat the departure; but, in accordance with the advice of Maldent, he decided to take the road to Ham, instead of following the direct line. From all he had learned, he gathered that the Spaniards would attack Saint-Quentin, by Rémicourt and the Faubourgs Saint-Jean and d'Isle.

Consequently, on these three sides Coligny would find an obstacle to his project.

The only road that, according to Maldent, would still have a chance of being free was that from Ham to Saint-Quentin, passing through marshes that were impracticable, except for those knowing the paths through them.

Coligny took with him three bands of foot-soldiers. These bands were commanded by Captains Saint-André, Rambouillet, and Louis Poy. But the third, which had arrived from Gascony that very day, was so exhausted that it had to stop on the road between Ham and La Fère.

Soon after the constable and the admiral left La Fère, they found sitting on his haunches, in the middle of the road, a huge black dog, which began howling with all his might. When they chased him, he ran before them about a hundred paces, sat down in the same fashion, and howled more horribly than ever. Chased again, he acted in a similar way, his howls becoming stronger and more desperate than before.

Then the constable, looking at M. de Coligny, —

"What the devil do you think of this, nephew?" he asked.

"Faith, I think the music is in no way pleasant, monsieur, *and I believe we are likely to play the comedy.*"

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"Yes, *and perhaps the tragedy as well,*" replied the constable.[1]

At this prediction both of them embraced, the admiral continuing his way to Ham, the constable returning to La Fère, which he left the same evening.

But another omen awaited the latter when he quitted the city.

He had scarcely gone a league on the road to Laon, when a kind of pilgrim, with a long beard and dressed in a long robe, seized the reins of his horse, crying, —

"Montmorency! Montmorency! I announce to thee that in three days all thy glory shall be in the dust!"

"Be it so," said the constable; "but I announce to thee that before that thine shall be in the gutter!"

And he gave him so rough a blow with his fist that the poor prophet fell unconscious on the roadside, and had his jaw broken.[2]

The constable went on his way, as did the admiral, each carrying with him his fatal omen.

Coligny reached Ham about five in the evening. His resolution was not to stop any time until he reached Saint-Quentin. Therefore, after allowing his soldiers an hour's rest, he resumed his march with his gendarmes and two companies of infantry only.

At Ham, MM. de Jarnac and de Luzarches did all they could to retain him, pointing out the services he could do in the open country, and offering to go and shut themselves up there in his stead; but he answered, —

"I would rather lose everything I possess than not bring to those brave people, who have shown such a good disposition to defend their city, the aid I promised them!"

And, as we have said, he set out, without a minute's delay, at the hour he had appointed.

At the gates of Ham he met the Abbot of Saint-Prix.

[1] "Mémoires de Mergey," folio 250.

[2] "Mémoires de Melvil."

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He was a very noble prelate, named Jacques de la Motte; was at the same time canon of Saint-Quentin, Chartres, Paris, and Le Mans; he possessed, besides, two priories, and when he died, he had been canon under five kings, beginning with François I.

Coligny, suspecting that the illustrious traveller came from Saint-Quentin, went up to him; the warrior and the churchman recognised each other.

When the first shots were fired at the gate of Isle, the abbot quitted the city by the Faubourg de Ponthoille, and was going with all speed to inform the king of the position of Saint-Quentin, and ask for succour. So, as the admiral had foreseen, the last road left open was the one he followed.

"M. l'Abbé," said the admiral to the prelate, "since you are about to see the king, do me the favour to tell his Majesty that you have this night met me at the head of a good troop, and that I reckon, with God's help, to enter Saint-Quentin, where I hope to do him good service."

And, having saluted the abbot, he continued on his way.

A league further on he began to perceive the fugitives of Origny-Sainte-Benoîte and other villages nearer Saint-Quentin, who, not finding a refuge in the city, had been forced to fly beyond it. The poor creatures were worn out with fatigue, — some still limping along, still others lying at the foot of trees, and dying of hunger and exhaustion.

The admiral distributed some help among them, and then resumed his march.

Two leagues from Saint-Quentin, night overtook him; but Maldent was there. He answered for the safety of those who wished to follow him; and, hoping there would be a liberal reward at the end of the journey, he offered, as a proof of his good faith, to march in front of the admiral's horse with a rope about his neck.

The band of Captain Rambouillet agreed to take a path pointed out to it; but Captain Saint-André declared he had a good guide of his own, and asked to follow him.

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No obstacle presented itself on the road to Saint-Quentin. The city had not been entirely invested; one of its sides, that of the Faubourg de Ponthoille, had been reserved for the English army, which was likely to arrive at any moment, and it was exactly this side that the admiral was approaching.

As a precaution, a view had been taken of the situation of the city and of its besiegers from the height of Savy, and it was perceived that the fires of the enemy extended only from the chapel of Épargnemaille to within some distance of Gaillard; it almost looked as if a path had been expressly opened for the little troop of the admiral.

This was the very point that troubled him; he was afraid of an ambuscade.

Procope, who, from his frequent conferences with Maldent, had become familiar with the Picard dialect, offered to reconnoitre.

The admiral accepted, and called a halt.

At the end of three-quarters of an hour the adventurer returned; the road was perfectly free, and he was able to approach so close to the rampart that he saw the sentinel who was patrolling between the gate of Ponthoille and the tower facing the Pré aux Oisons.

Then Procope whistled to the sentinel across the little rivulet which at that period ran along the foot of the wall; the sentinel stopped, and tried to penetrate the darkness.

Procope whistled a second time, and, sure that he had been seen, announced the approach of the admiral.

In this way the post at the gate of Ponthoille would be warned, and the admiral introduced into the city immediately on his arrival.

Coligny praised highly the intelligence of Procope, approved of all he had done, and now resumed his march with more confidence, guided still by Maldent.

At thirty yards from the gate a man rose from a fosse; he held a pistol in his hand, ready to be fired, if, instead of a friendly troop, the troop approaching was a hostile one.

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Suddenly a long thick mass of shadow was noticed on the ramparts; it was a hundred men, who had been summoned to this point in case the news given by Procope to the sentinel might be a deception to conceal a surprise.

The man with the pistol, who had started up from the fosse, was Lieutenant Théligny.

He advanced, saying, —

"France and Théligny!"

"France and Coligny!" replied the admiral.

The recognition was instantaneous; and, the promised reinforcement having arrived, the gates were thrown open.

The admiral and his hundred and twenty men entered.

At the same moment the report of his arrival spread through the city; the inhabitants left their houses, half-clad, shouting with joy. Many wished to illuminate; some had already begun.

The admiral ordered the shouts to cease, and the lights to be extinguished. He feared the enemy might be more on the alert on account of this, and redouble their watchfulness. Besides, Saint-André and his troop had not yet arrived.

At three o'clock in the morning there was no news of them yet.

Then, as it was near daybreak, and it was of the utmost importance that they should not fall in with any Spanish troops, Lactance advanced with six or eight of his Jacobins.

The good fathers, whom their habit protected from all suspicion, offered to scatter about the country for a radius of one or two leagues, and bring back the strayed company.

Their offer was accepted, and they set out, some by the gate of Ponthoille, others by the Sainte-Catherine postern.

Between four and five in the morning a troop of sixty men, led by two Jacobin fathers, made its appearance.

Then, towards six, a second troop of from fifty-five to sixty arrived, also led by a monk.

Captain Saint-André was with this second troop. The

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guide had gone astray, and led the others astray with him.

The rest of the fathers arrived, one after another; and God, who protected them, permitted that for this time no misfortune should happen to any of them.

As soon as the last man had entered the city, Coligny ordered the roll-call.

It was found that, thanks to him, the garrison was reinforced by two hundred and fifty men. It was, numerically, a very weak relief; but the presence of its leader, by restoring courage to the most timid, had produced an immense moral effect.

Théligny, the mayor, and governor of the city, gave an exact account of what took place the evening before. Convinced more than ever that it was necessary to defend the Faubourg d'Isle to the last extremity, Coligny proceeded towards this point first. At the top of the old wall, in the midst of the balls that whistled around him, he decided that in the evening, at nightfall, a sortie should be made, with the object of burning the neighbouring houses, from the interior of which the Spaniards were constantly harassing the soldiers guarding the ramparts. If they succeeded in this, and took from the besiegers the boulevard they had seized the evening before, a trench might then be dug in front of the old wall, in order to cover it by a mask, and save the curtains from the fire of the besiegers.[1]

Meanwhile, to concentrate on this point all the means of defence possible, Coligny ordered an embrasure to be opened at each flank of the rampart, on which two pieces of cannon were placed.

Then, these first urgent dispositions made, he thought it time to examine the quality and quantity of the enemies with whom he would have to deal.

It was easy enough, for that matter, to recognise by the

[1] See, on the siege of Saint-Quentin, the excellent work of M. Charles Gomart.

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banners over their tents to what nation belonged the soldiers and the princes commanding them.

From the place where he was — that is to say, from the most advanced angle of the old wall — the admiral perceived three camps perfectly distinct, each placed on a hill.

The farthest was that of Count Schwartzburg. The intermediate one was that of Counts Egmont and Horn, — those two inseparables, not to be separated even in death. The nearest camp was that of Emmanuel Philibert.

Facing the admiral were the Spanish troops, who had taken part in the fight of the evening before, commanded by Julian Romeron and Carondelet.

In fine, on his left extended the extreme point of the principal camp.

This camp, which covered nearly half a league of ground, and in which the Duke of Savoy pitched his tents later on, was almost entirely surrounded by the river Somme. This stream forms a semicircle from the place where it rises to where it passes between Saint-Quentin and the Faubourg d'Isle.

It stretched along an entire side of the wall, from the river to the Faubourg Saint-Jean.

In this camp were the quarters of Field-Marshal Beincourt, the Margrave of Berg, the Duke of Saïmona, Count Schwartzburg, Count Mansfield, Bernard de Mendoza, Ferdinand Gonzague, the Bishop of Arras, Count Feria, Count Rinago, Marshal Carcheris, Duke Ernest of Brunswick, Don Juan Manrique, Messire de Bossu, Messire de Berlaimont, Comte de Mègue, and Sieur Lazori de Schwendy, — in fine, the quarters of the heavy cavalry and the halberdiers.

From Tour Saint-Jean to the big tower, — that is to say, at the point diametrically opposite the Faubourg d'Isle, — stretched the Flemish camp, where a battery stood from which the firing was so terrible that from that day to this the line occupied by that battery has been called Hell Street.

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In fine, there remained that face of the city extending from Ponthoille to Tourival, which, as we have said, was completely unoccupied by the enemy so far, being the position reserved for the English army.

This sort of preparatory review having been gone through, the admiral descended to the Town Hall. There he ordered that he should be given a list of all men fit to bear arms; that search be made for all the arms that might still be in the city; that the names of all the workmen and workwomen be taken down who could be employed at the earthworks; that a perquisition should be made with the view of gathering together all the tools, spades, shovels, baskets, pickaxes, and such like; that an account should be drawn up of all grain, flour, wines, cattle, provisions of every sort contained in the public magazines as well as in private houses, for the purpose of establishing some order in the consumption and avoiding pillage. In fine, he demanded an exact account, not only of the artillery, but also of the quantity of powder and balls, as well as the number of men serving the cannon.

During the tour he had just made the admiral had seen only two mills: a windmill situated at the end of the Rue du Billon, near the Red Tower, and a water-mill on the Somme, at the foot of the Faubourg d'Isle. These two mills were not enough for grinding the corn necessary for the consumption of a city of twenty thousand inhabitants.

He expressed his fears on this point. But the aldermen at once reassured him, declaring there were fifteen or sixteen hand-mills in the city which could be worked by horses, and which, if kept going constantly, would suffice for the nourishment of the city and garrison.

Then Coligny saw to the billeting of the soldiers, adopting the division of the city into four quarters, but subdividing those quarters into sixteen parts, for the surveillance of which he appointed sixteen citizens and sixteen officers, all whose decisions were to be in concert. The troops were assigned to the guard of the walls, conjointly

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with the bourgeois militia, each body having to protect its respective quarter. The Town Council was to sit permanently, in order to be able to answer without delay to all the requisitions addressed to it.

In fine, the admiral presented to the corporation the gentlemen forming what to-day we should call his staff, who were to act as intermediaries between him and the magistrates.

In addition to these officers Captain Languetot was named superintendent of artillery, having at his disposal ten men-at-arms to whom was assigned the mission of verifying the quantity of powder employed by the cannoneers each day, and who were particularly charged to watch that this precious powder should be sheltered from all danger.

While going along the ramparts, Coligny remarked, near the gate Saint-Jean, at hardly a hundred paces from the wall, a large number of gardens filled with fruit-trees and surrounded by lofty and dense hedges. These trees and hedges offered to the enemy a cover that allowed him to approach the ramparts.

As these gardens belonged to the chief persons of the city, the admiral asked the council's consent to clear them: this consent was given without any difficulty; and all the carpenters of the city were at once set to work cutting down the hedges and fruit-trees. Their branches were destined for fascines.

Then, seeing the assembly of the same mind and same spirit, nobles, bourgeois, and soldiers animated, if not with the same enthusiasm, at least with the same energy, Coligny retired to the house of the governor, where he had appointed a meeting of the officers of all the companies.

This house was situated in the Rue de la Monnaie, between the Templerie and the Jacobins.

The officers were informed of what had just been done. The admiral spoke of the good spirit of the inhabitants, and their resolution to defend themselves to the last extremity; he urged them, by softening, as much as possible,

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the hardships of the situation, to maintain cordial union between those two powers so rarely in accord, — the army and the bourgeoisie.

Each captain had, besides, to furnish, on the spot, a statement of the condition of his company, in order that the admiral might know exactly the number of men he could dispose of, and figure up how many military mouths had to be fed.

Then, going up with an engineer to the gallery of the Collegiate, he pointed out, from that elevated point, where a view of the entire circumvallation of the city could be embraced, the excavations that had to be filled up and the elevations that had to be levelled down.

These orders having been given, and being alone with the officer whom he intended sending to the constable to obtain a reinforcement of troops, while it was still possible to revictual the place, he decided that the Savy road, all covered with vines and debouching through a chain of little hills, was the most favourite route for such troops as might try to enter the city.

Captain Saint-André had, in fact, entered from this quarter in full daylight, and without being seen.

Then, these orders being given, and these dispositions arranged, Coligny at last remembered that he was a man, and returned to snatch a few hours' repose.

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VIII.

THE TENT OF THE ADVENTURERS.

While all these measures for the public safety were being taken by Coligny, on whom rested the entire responsibility of the defence of the city, and while the admiral, a little reassured, as we have said, by the ardour of the soldiers and the courage of the citizens, had retired to the governor's palace to take a little repose, our adventurers, ready, also, to fight for the city, — because Coligny had taken them into his pay, after certain reservations had been made by Procope, — our adventurers, taking everything carelessly, waiting for the first signal of the trumpet and the drum, had pitched their tent a hundred paces from the gate of Isle, and established their domicile on a vacant piece of ground extending, in front of the Cordeliers, from the extremity of the Rue Wager to the talus of the wall.

As a result of the entrance of Coligny into Saint-Quentin, they were all united again. They were settling accounts.

Yvonnet, standing, had just faithfully poured into the common treasury the half of the sum he owed to the liberality of King Henri II.; Procope, half the fees he had received as notary; Maldent, half of the wages he earned as guide; Malemort, half of the gratuity given him for going to warn Coligny, all wounded though he was, of the arrival of the Spaniards; Pilletrousse, in fine, half of the amount he had gained by selling what was left of the ox of the two Scharfensteins.

As to the latter, as there had been no fight, they had nothing to contribute to the pile, and were busy roasting the remains of the quarter of the ox left after the distri-

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bution of the other three quarters by Pilletrousse, not at all concerning themselves about the future scarcity of provisions likely to result from the blockade.

Lactance brought two large sacks of wheat and a sack of beans, which he offered to the community instead of money; it was a present to our adventurers from the convent of the Jacobins, whose monks had, as we know, been organised into a regiment and had chosen Lactance as captain.

Fracasso was all absorbed in his search for a rhyme to *perdre*, which he did not find.

Under a kind of shed, hastily built, the two horses of Yvonnet and Malemort were munching their hay and enjoying their oats.

A portable mill was established under the shed, not to have it near the horses, but to have it under cover; the duty of turning it was intrusted to Heinrich and Franz.

The pecuniary affairs of the association were in a good condition; and forty golden crowns, carefully counted by Procope, counted over again by Maldent, and arranged in a line in piles by Pilletrousse, were ready to enter the common chest.

Should the association continue equally prosperous for a whole year, it was the intention of Procope to purchase a notary's or an attorney's business in some village; Maldent's to purchase a little farm on the road to La Fère, — a farm he knew of old, for he was, as we have said, from that country; Yvonnet's to marry some rich heiress, to whose hand his elegance and fortune would give him a double title; Pilletrousse's to found some great butchery either in Paris or in a provincial town; Fracasso's to have his poems printed after the manner of M. Ronsard and M. Jodelle; in fine, Malemort's to fight for his own hand, and this as long as he liked, — a stipulation that would save him from being bothered by the warnings of his comrades and those into whose service he entered, that he was taking too little care of his personal safety.

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As to the two Scharfensteins, having no idea, they had no project.

At the moment when Maldent was counting the last crown, and Pilletrousse was building up the last pile, a kind of shadow fell upon the adventurers, indicating that some opaque body had interposed between them and the light.

Instinctively Procope stretched forth his hands towards the gold; Maldent, quicker still, covered it with his cap.

Yvonnet turned round. The same young man who had tried to buy his horse in the camp of La Fère was standing at the entrance to the tent.

Quick as Maldent had been in covering the money with his cap, the unknown had seen it; and, with the prompt glance of a man to whom such reckonings are familiar, he had calculated that the sum they were so anxious to hide from his eyes amounted to some fifty crowns of gold.

"Ah, ah!" said he, "it would seem the harvest has not been bad! An unseasonable moment to propose doing a little business with you: you are sure to be hard as the devil, my masters!"

"That depends on the gravity of the business," said Procope.

"There are several kinds of business," said Maldent.

"Does this business lead to anything further than the benefit to be gained from the business itself?" asked Pilletrousse.

"If there are blows to be given, I 'm your man," said Malemort.

"Provided it be not an expedition against any church or convent, it might be arranged," said Lactance.

"Particularly if it occur by moonlight," said Fracasso. "I am in favour of nocturnal expeditions; they alone are poetic and picturesque."

Yvonnet said nothing; he was gazing at the stranger.

The two Scharfensteins were entirely occupied in roasting their piece of beef.

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All these observations, each of which painted the character of the speaker, issued almost simultaneously from the lips of the adventurers.

The young man smiled. He replied, at the same time, to all the questions, regarding, successively, the person to whom was addressed the fraction of his answer.

"Yes," he said, "the affair is grave; no graver could be imagined. And, although there are advantages to be gained outside the business itself, as there are a good share of blows to be given and taken, I reckon on offering you a reasonable sum, and one that must satisfy the most difficult. Moreover, religious minds need not be alarmed," he added; "there is no question of church or convent; and it is probable that, for greater security, we shall act by night; I must say, however, that I should prefer a dark night to a night lit up by moon and stars."

"Well, well," said Procope, who usually took charge of the discussion of the interests of the society, "develop your proposal, and we shall see if it be acceptable."

"My proposal is," replied the young man, "to hire you for a nocturnal expedition, or a skirmish, or combat, or battle in open day."

"And what shall we have to do in this nocturnal expedition, or skirmish, or combat, or battle?"

"You will have to attack him whom I attack, to surround and strike him until he dies."

"And if he surrenders?"

"I warn you beforehand that he shall have no quarter from me."

"*Peste!*" said Procope; "it is war to the death, then?"

"To the death! you are right, my friend!"

"Good!" growled Malemort, rubbing his hands; "that's the way to talk!"

"But still," said Maldent, "if the ransom was good, it seems to me it would be better to hold to ransom than to kill."

"Consequently, I shall treat of the ransom and the death

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at the same time, in order that these two cases be provided for."

"That is to say," returned Procope, "that you buy the man, living or dead?"

"At the same price."

"Good!" said Maldent; "it seems to me, however, that a live man is worth more than a dead one."

"No, for I would buy the live man from you only to make him a dead one; that's all."

"Let us see," said Procope; "how much do you give?"

"A moment, Procope!" said Yvonnet; "it is right that M. Waldeck should tell us who the man is."

The young man made a bound backward.

"You have pronounced a name—" said he.

"Which is yours, monsieur," returned Yvonnet, while the adventurers looked at one another, beginning to suspect that it was to Yvonnet they should leave the care of their interests.

The young man scowled with his thick red eyebrows.

"And since when have you recognised me?" he asked.

"Do you wish me to tell you?" answered Yvonnet.

Waldeck hesitated.

"Do you remember the Château du Parcq?" continued the adventurer.

Waldeck turned pale.

"Do you remember the forest of Saint-Pol-sur-Ternoise?"

"It is just because I remember it that I am here, and making the proposal you are discussing."

"Then it is Duke Emmanuel Philibert that you are proposing to us to kill," said Yvonnet, quietly.

"*Peste!*" cried Procope, "the Duke of Savoy!"

"You see it was good to have an explanation," said Yvonnet, casting a side glance at his companions.

"And why should one not kill the Duke of Savoy?" exclaimed Malemort.

"I do not say that the Duke of Savoy may not be killed," retorted Procope.

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"Nor I!" said Malemort; "the Duke of Savoy is our enemy, since we have taken service with the admiral, and I do not see why he should not be killed like another!"

Maldent made a sign of assent.

"It should cost dearer!" he said.

"Not to say that it would endanger our souls!" said Lactance.

"Bah!" said Waldeck, with his evil smile; "do you believe that, if he is not in hell for something else, Benvenuto Cellini has been damned for slaying the Connétable de Bourbon?"

"The Connétable de Bourbon was a rebel, *distinguo*," said Procope.

"And, moreover, as he was fighting against Pope Clement VII., it was a pious work to kill him," added Lactance.

"Oh! and of course your Duke of Savoy is such a friend of Pope Paul IV.!" returned Waldeck, shrugging his shoulders.

"Well, well, that is not the question at all," said Pilletrousse; "the question is the price."

"Good!" returned Waldeck; "that is called returning to the question. What do you say to five hundred gold crowns, — a hundred as earnest-money, and four hundred when the thing is done?"

Procope shook his head. "I say that we are still far from the sum required."

"I am sorry," said Waldeck, "for, not to lose time, this is my last offer. I have five hundred gold crowns, and not a carolus more; if you refuse, I shall have to look elsewhere."

The adventurers sought one another's eyes; five out of the seven shook their heads. Malemort alone was of opinion that they should accept, because he saw there were blows to be given and taken. Fracasso had fallen back into his poetic reveries.

"For that matter," said Waldeck, "there 's no hurry; you will reflect. I know you; you know me. We dwell in the same city; we can easily find each other again."

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And, saluting the adventurers with a slight nod, he turned on his heel, and was gone.

"Ought we to call him back?" said Procope.

"Faith!" said Maldent, "five hundred crowns are not found under every hedge!"

"And then," said Yvonnet, "it is all he has; the loveliest girl in the world cannot give more than that."

"My brethren," said Lactance, "the lives of the princes of the earth are under the direct guardianship of Heaven; one risks one's soul by touching them. We must touch them, then, only for a sum that will allow each one of us to purchase the indulgences of which he shall have need, whether we succeed or no. The intention, my brethren, —the worthy prior of the Jacobins told me so yesterday, —the intention, my brethren, is taken for the deed."

"There is no doubt," said Procope, "that the deed itself would gain us more than the sum mentioned in the proposal. What if we did it on our own account, eh?"

"Yes," said Malemort; "let us do the job."

"Gentlemen," said Procope, "the idea is M. Waldeck's. To take from a man his idea, especially when he has confided it to us, would be robbery. You know my principles in matters of law."

"Well," said Yvonnet, "if the idea is his, and he has a property in it, I think it would be as well to accept the five hundred crowns."

"Yes; let us accept and have a fight!" cried Malemort.

"Oh, there 's no hurry," said Maldent.

"And if he treats with others?" asked Yvonnet.

"Yes, if he treats with others?" repeated Procope.

"Let us accept and have a fight!" howled Malemort.

"Yes! yes! let us accept!" cried all, with one voice.

"Let us accept!" cried the two Scharfensteins, who entered at the moment, bearing on a plank their piece of roast beef, and, without knowing what it was all about, ranged themselves on the side of the majority, giving a fresh proof of good disposition.

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"Then let some one run after him and call him back," said Procope.

"Let me!" said Malemort. And he rushed out.

But no sooner had he done so than he heard some shots in the direction of the Faubourg d'Isle, which suddenly increased to a lively fusillade.

"A fight! a fight!" cried Malemort, drawing his sword, and running towards the sound, which came from a point directly opposite to that made for by the bastard of Waldeck, who was going towards the tower of L'Eau.

"Oh, oh! there is fighting at the Faubourg d'Isle!" exclaimed Yvonnet; "I must see what has become of Gudule!"

"But the business?" cried Procope.

"Finish it as you like," said Yvonnet; "whatever you do will be well done, — I give you my proxy."

He rushed after Malemort, who had already passed the first bridge, and had his foot on the island forming the strait of Saint-Pierre.

Let us follow, in our turn, Malemort and Yvonnet, in order to find out what was taking place at the Faubourg d'Isle.

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IX.

A FIGHT.

It will be recollected that, on entering the government palace, Coligny had given orders, towards the evening, for a sortie, having for object to burn the houses lining the exterior boulevard, under cover of which the Spaniards were able to fire on the defenders of the city, who, stationed on an interior plateau, had no shelter from it.

These orders had been given to MM. Théligny, Jarnac, and Luzarches.

Consequently, at six in the evening, the three officers collected a hundred men from their companies and a hundred and twenty citizens of good will, led by Guillaume and Jean Pauquet.

These two hundred and twenty men were to attack two thousand.

Hardly thirty paces from the old wall the road bifurcates, as we have already stated.

One of these branches leads to Guise, the other to La Fère.

The houses to be destroyed lay on each side of this road, and on each of its branches.

The little troop, once out of the city, had therefore to divide itself into two bands: one attacking on the right, the other on the left, and setting fire to the houses at the same time.

Guillaume and Jean Pauquet, who knew the localities, took charge of these two bands.

At half-past six the gate of the Faubourg d'Isle was opened, and the little troop marched out at double quick.

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But secret as had been the gathering, quick as had been the sortie, the gathering had been signalled by the sentries, and the sortie anticipated by Carondelet and Julian Romeron.

The result was that at the opening of each street the French found a platoon of Spaniards double their number, and that from each window there was a hail of death upon them.

But still, such was the impetuosity of their shock that the platoons of Spaniards defending the two streets were broken, and, in spite of the fire from the windows, five or six houses were invaded.

No need of saying that Malemort, shouting, howling, cursing, and, above all, striking, had managed to make his way to the head of the two columns, and to be the first to enter one of the houses.

Once in the house, it is useless to say that Malemort forgot he was there to burn it; and, rushing up the staircase, he gained the upper story.

On the other hand, those who came with him forgot that he had entered before them, and, remembering only their orders, piled up fagots in the lower rooms, and especially at the foot of the staircase.

Then they set fire to them.

The same happened to two or three houses lining the boulevard.

The Spaniards had at first supposed the attack to be an ordinary sortie; but they soon guessed the aim of the French from the torrents of smoke escaping from the ground-floors.

Then they united all their efforts, and, being ten times superior to the little troop, they repulsed it.

But the latter had at least been partially successful: flames were beginning to issue from the roofs of two or three houses.

It will be remembered that Yvonnet, not having been one of those selected for the sortie, had had the idea of utilising his time by visiting Mademoiselle Gudule, whose terrors

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he calmed; these terrors were great, for, as we have said, the father and uncle of the young girl acted as guides on this occasion.

For a moment the cries, shouts, noise of the fusillade were so loud that Yvonnet himself was anxious to learn what was passing, and crept into the garret, accompanied by the young girl, who followed him like his shadow, a little through fear, but much through love.

Then, through a dormer window, he could form some idea of what was going on.

The firing from the arquebuses never ceased; and, at the same time, the clash of steel against steel showed that there was a hand-to-hand conflict in the streets.

This was not all. As we have said, the smoke issued through the roofs of four or five houses, and in the midst of the smoke human beings were seen going and coming quite scared.

These were the Spaniards, surprised by the conflagration, and who, as the stairs were burning, could not descend from the upper stories of the houses.

It was easily seen that the Spaniards in the houses were in great fear; but, in one case, this fear rose to absolute dismay.

It was where Malemort was operating, who, paying no attention at all to the conflagration, was attacking, smiting, fighting, in the midst of the smoke.

At the moment Yvonnet put his nose out of the window the scene was passing on the first story.

Such of the Spaniards as preserved some coolness while defending this first story, having to wrestle at once with the flames and with a man who seemed to be a demon, at last jumped out of the window.

The others instinctively retreated to the second story.

Malemort did not trouble himself about those who leaped from the windows; but he pursued those who fled to the second story, howling his favourite cry, "A fight!"

During all this time the devouring element was doing

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its office, Malemort was pursuing the Spaniards, and the fire was pursuing Malemort.

Doubtless the adventurer owed his by no means usual invulnerability this time to the powerful ally marching behind him, to whom he evidently paid no attention.

Soon the smoke obscured the second story, as it had the first, and the fire darted its tongues of flame through the floor.

One or two Spaniards, braving the danger of the fall, jumped through the windows of the second story just as their comrades had jumped through those of the first. Others tried to escape by the roof.

Two men and the half of a third man succeeded in getting through a dormer window; we say *the half of a third man*, because the latter seemed to have been brought to a halt, and showed unmistakably by the expression of his countenance that things were happening to that part of his body remaining behind which were very disagreeable.

Malemort was, in fact, dealing that inactive portion of the human frame fearful blows with his sword.

The Spaniard, after making vain attempts to join his companions running along the roofs, fell back, and, in spite of a final effort to hang on to the sill of the window, disappeared at last entirely.

Five minutes after it was the face of Malemort that appeared at the dormer window, instead of that of the Spaniard. The new face was easily recognisable by its linen mask,— a souvenir of the last battle of the owner, which appeared at the window instead of that of the Spaniard.

He saw his two enemies flying, and was setting out in pursuit.

Malemort might have been taken for a tiler or a rope-dancer, so steadily did he tread the narrow path.

If he had been a Mussulman his shadow would undoubtedly have crossed, without the aid of a balancing pole, that bridge of Mahomet's Paradise which leads from earth to heaven, and is not broader than the edge of a razor.

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The two fugitives soon saw the danger that menaced them.

One of them came to a decision immediately: at the risk of breaking his legs, he slid down the slope of the roof, seized the border of the window, and slipped through into the room below.

This house, though placed between two fires, had so far escaped.

Malemort did not bother himself about the Spaniard who had so far succeeded in his perilous slide, and continued his pursuit of the one who remained.

From their observatory Yvonnet and Gudule followed the course of these aerial gymnastics, — Yvonnet with all the interest such a spectacle would naturally produce in a man, Gudule with all the terror it must excite in a woman.

In this fashion the two acrobats, going from house to house, gained the last roof, which, like many of our old buildings, seemed to lean forward in order to admire itself in the river.

This house was of wood, and was burning on all sides.

Arrived at the extremity of the roof, and, seeing that he could not go farther, except Saint-James, the patron of Spain, lent him wings, the fugitive, who doubtless did not know how to swim, turned back, resolved to sell his life dearly.

The struggle began; but at the moment it reached its highest degree of fury the roof cracked to give exit to the smoke first, and the flames afterwards; then it tottered, then sank, burying both combatants in its frightful crater.

One of them disappeared entirely. The other hung on to a rafter that, though burning, was still solid, recovered his centre of gravity, made his way, all on fire, to the extremity of the rafter, and then, launching himself from the top of a second story, threw himself into the Somme.

Gudule uttered a loud cry; Yvonnet almost flung himself out of the window; for a moment both hardly breathed.

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Was the bold plunger engulfed for ever, or was he going to reappear?

Then, the second question, was it the Spaniard, or was it Malemort?

Soon the surface of the water bubbled, and a head was seen to appear, then arms, then a torso, which swam, according to the flow of the water, evidently with the design of landing behind the old wall.

The moment the swimmer took this direction, it was pretty certain it was Malemort.

Yvonnet and Gudule descended rapidly, and ran to the point where the swimmer, in all probability, was going to land. And, in fact, they arrived just in time to drag out of the water, half burned, half drowned, the furious fighter, who, utterly exhausted, fainted in their arms, and brandished his sword, shouting, "Battle! battle!"

Bad as was Malemort's case, every one did not get off as well as he did.

Repulsed, as we have said, by the old Spanish band of Carondelet and Don Julian, the soldiers and bourgeois, after succeeding in burning two or three houses, not having been able to retreat in as orderly a manner as was desirable, were huddled together at the old wall in a manner that gave the Spaniards a chance of having their revenge.

Thirty soldiers and twenty townsmen remained on the square; and for a time it looked as if the Spaniards would enter pell-mell with those they were pursuing. Yvonnet heard the cries of the Spaniards, who were already howling, "The city is taken!" He ran to the tent of the adventurers, all the time shouting, "To arms!" and returned with a reinforcement of a hundred men, — one part of whom scattered along the ramparts, while the other rushed upon the enemy, already under the vault.

But at the head of those who rushed to the aid of the faubourg were the two Scharfensteins, armed, the one with his club, the other with his two-handed sword. The blows fell upon the Spaniards thick as those of the flail

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upon the threshing-floor, and all had to recoil before the two giants.

Once the Spaniards were driven out of the vault, the question was to close the gates. Now, this was not a thing easily done, for the enemy opposed it with all their might, — some holding the doors back with their hands, others with the butts of their muskets. But the two Scharfensteins managed to get between the combatants and the wall; and, stiffening themselves against it, they gradually, but irresistibly, succeeded in bringing the folds of the door together, and shot the bolts across them.

This task accomplished, they breathed noisily and in such perfect unison that it almost looked as if these two bodies had but a single pair of lungs.

But the two giants had hardly regained their normal condition, when a cry of terror resounded, "To the walls! to the walls!"

Two breaches had, in fact, been made in the wall, one on each side of the gate, with the object of transporting from that quarter the earth needed for constructing certain platforms for artillery; these breaches had been closed up with bales of wool, etc.

Now, when the besiegers were driven from the gate, they bethought themselves of the breaches, and hoped to carry the city by making a sudden dash on them.

The two Scharfensteins, on rushing out of the vault, had only to cast a glance round them to judge of the imminence of the peril. In spite of their usual custom of fighting together, a division of their strength was, in the circumstances, so urgent that, after exchanging a few words with their usual laconic sobriety, the uncle ran to the breach on the right, the nephew to the breach on the left.

The enemy, being supplied with those long pikes which, at the time, formed the regular weapon of the Spanish infantry, were mounting to the assault of both breaches, driving citizens and soldiers before that forest of steel.

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Heinrich Scharfenstein, for the moment proprietor of the mace, saw that this short heavy weapon would be almost useless against the Spanish pikes ten feet long; he hung his mace to his belt, and, without ever slackening his course, picked up a huge block of stone lying on the rampart, and ran with this enormous mass to the breach, crying, "Look out!"

It was the breach at which Yvonnet was fighting.

The latter saw him, and divined his intention. With a sweep of his sword he kept back his comrades, and gave free course to the Spaniards who were mounting the breach; but, the moment they were halfway up on the wall, the German giant made his appearance on the top of the breach, raised above his head the block he had until now carried on his shoulder, and, combining all the impetus of his strength with the natural weight of the projectile, he launched it on the first ranks of the Spaniards with a violence that no catapult ever constructed could surpass.

The rock descended, bounding through the dense column, breaking, crushing, pulverising everything it met on its way.

Then, through the road opened for him, Heinrich rushed with his terrible mace, and, striking right and left, soon made an end of those whom the gigantic block had spared or had only half reached.

In less than ten minutes this breach was cleared of the besiegers.

Franz had also wrought deeds equally marvellous.

He, too, had cried to the soldiers and citizens to look out, and at his voice their ranks had opened; then with his great two-handed sword, he began to mow down that harvest of lances, with every stroke cutting off five or six pike-heads, as easily as Tarquin, in the garden of Gabiæ, hewed off the heads of the poppies in presence of his son's messenger. Then, when he had now before him men armed with sticks only, he flung himself into the Spanish

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ranks, and began mowing down men with the same fury he had until now shown in mowing down lances.

Consequently, the Spaniards were baffled at this point also.

But an unforeseen incident was very nearly making Franz lose all the fruit of the glorious succour he had just brought to the people of Saint-Quentin.

A man, more ardent even than himself after the human quarry, slipped under his arm, shouting, "Battle!" and rushed in pursuit of the Spaniards.

It was Malemort, who, after regaining consciousness, had swallowed a bottle of wine given him by Gudule, and at once returned to the charge.

Unfortunately, two or three of those he was pursuing, seeing that they were followed by only a single man, turned round, and although, as the heads of their pikes had been lopped off, their only weapons were a sort of stick, one of them with a blow of his stick knocked down and utterly stunned Malemort.

Citizens and soldiers uttered a cry of regret; they believed the brave adventurer dead. Luckily Franz had made certain observations on the thickness of his comrade's skull. He ran up to him, with one stroke of his formidable sword split the head of the Spaniard, who was about to finish Malemort with his dagger, took his companion by the foot, and hurried with him to the breach, where he flung him. Then Malemort began to open his eyes, murmuring, "Battle!" in the arms of Lactance, who ran up with his Jacobins.

Behind the monks came the admiral, at the head of a small band of select arquebusiers; these opened such a well-directed fire on the exterior boulevard and on such houses as still remained standing, that the Spaniards were forced to get under cover, and for some time kept very quiet.

The admiral then investigated the condition of affairs: the loss had been very great, and the Faubourg d'Isle

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escaped being carried by storm only by a very narrow chance. Many captains did their best to persuade the admiral to abandon this point, the defence of which had so far cost the garrison and the citizens combined a loss of over threescore men; but Coligny was firm: he was convinced that the prolongation of the siege, perhaps the safety of the city, depended on the occupation of this suburb.

He gave orders that every effort should be made during the approaching night to repair the two breaches and do whatever else could be done for the safety of the quarter.

The Jacobins, whose sombre monastic habits rendered them less noticeable in the darkness, were assigned to this duty, which they performed with the impassive courage of monastic devotion.

As a nocturnal attack was feared, the arquebusiers watched on the rampart; while, to give the alarm, in case the enemy might think of turning the old wall, sentries were stationed at intervals of twenty yards along the entire line of the marshes of the Somme.

It was a terrible night for the city of Saint-Quentin, this night of the 3d and 4th of August, — a night when it had to bewail the loss of its first dead!

So every one watched over his house and quarter with the same zeal with which the sentries watched over the Faubourg d'Isle.

The poor inhabitants of the faubourg, understanding that the hottest part of the attack and defence would be there, were quitting their houses, dragging after them in carts or hand-barrows their most valuable possessions. Among the emigrants who abandoned the faubourg for the city was Guillaume Pauquet, whose brother Jean offered him the hospitality of his house, situated at the angle made by the Rue du Vieux-Marché and the Rue des Arbalétriers.

His daughter Gudule, still stunned by the events of the day, entered the city, leaning on his arm; she turned her

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head from time to time, saying to herself it was from her sorrow at seeing abandoned to certain destruction the house in which she was born, but in reality to make sure that the handsome Yvonnet was not losing sight of her.

In fact, Yvonnet was following, at a reasonable distance, the bourgeois, his daughter, and the weavers whom Jean Pauquet had lent his brother to help him in transporting his furniture, and who were conscientiously acquitting themselves of their duty.

It was, then, a great consolation for poor Gudule to see the young man crossing Saint-Quentin through its entire length, bisecting the square of the Hôtel de Ville, following the Rue Sainte-Marguerite, the Rue du Vieux-Marché, and, at the corner of the Rue aux Pourceaux, saw him enter his uncle's house, known by its sign of the *Navette couronnée.*

Under pretence of great fatigue, — and the pretence was plausible after such a day, — Gudule asked leave to retire at once to her room, and she was permitted to do so without further remark.

Gudule really began to believe that there was a special providence for lovers when she saw that the lodging intended by her uncle for her and her father was a kind of little pavilion, forming the angle of the garden, and opening on the road running along the rampart.

So as soon as she found herself alone in her new domicile, her first care was to extinguish the lamp, as if she had gone to bed, and open the window, in order to explore the neighbourhood, and see what facility this window could offer to a nimble climber.

The facility was great: this portion of the rampart, which extended between the gate of the Vieux-Marché and the tower Dameuse, was certainly the most deserted in the city. A rope-ladder eight or ten feet high would perform for the pavilion of the Rue des Arbalétriers the same office performed by the post at the house in the Faubourg d'Isle.

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It is true the partitions separating the room of Gudule from the room of Guillaume were very slight, and the slightest noise in her chamber would be likely to arouse paternal suspicion; but, the ladder of ropes once suitably fixed, what should hinder Gudule from descending on the rampart instead of Yvonnet mounting to her chamber?

By this arrangement either the lovers would have very bad luck, or the chamber, remaining solitary, would be necessarily noiseless and voiceless.

Gudule was plunged into all these strategetical combinations which, for the moment, made of her a tactician almost as able as the admiral himself, when she saw a shadow glide along the garden wall.

Yvonnet was also engaged in a tour of exploration, and reconnoitring the new field of battle on which he was to manœuvre.

It was not a siege difficult to make, was this of Maître Pauquet's house, particularly for a man who, like our adventurer, had a spy in the place.

Consequently, everything was arranged for the following night without any difficulty.

Then, as the footsteps of Guillaume Pauquet were heard on the staircase, falling a little heavy on account of the fatigue of the day, Gudule closed her window, and Yvonnet disappeared through the Rue Saint-Jean.

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X.

M. DE THÉLIGNY.

DAYBREAK found the admiral on the rampart. Far from being cast down by the check of the evening before, Gaspard de Coligny decided that a fresh attempt should be made.

In his opinion, the enemy was aware that the city had received a reinforcement, but was utterly ignorant of its extent. They must try to convince the Spaniards that this reinforcement was much larger than it was in reality.

Emmanuel Philibert might thus be led to undertake a regular siege, if he were forced to believe that the city could not be taken by a surprise; now a regular siege was a respite for ten days, for a fortnight, perhaps for a month, and during that period the constable would make an attempt to relieve them, or the king would have leisure to adopt the measures required by the circumstances.

He therefore summoned M. de Théligny, the young lieutenant of the Dauphin's Company.

This officer presented himself immediately. He had done wonders the preceding evening at the Faubourg d'Isle, and yet had escaped without a wound; so that the soldiers, seeing him emerge without a scratch from a fusillade of balls, from the midst of swords and lances, had baptised him *the Invulnerable*.

He approached the admiral, gay and smiling, like a man who has just done his duty, and is ready to do it again. The admiral led him behind the parapet of one of the towers.

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"M. de Théligny," he said, "do you see yon Spanish post well from here?"

Théligny made a sign that he saw it perfectly.

"Well, it seems to me it could be easily surprised with thirty or forty troopers. Order out thirty or forty men of your company, put a safe man at their head, and carry that post for me."

"But, M. de Coligny," asked Théligny, smiling, "why should I not be that safe man myself who is to command the sortie? I confess I believe every one of my officers to be a safe man; but I am also pretty certain, for very different reasons, that I am a safe man myself."

The admiral laid a hand on his shoulder.

"My dear Théligny," he said, "men of your character are rare; they ought not, therefore, to be exposed to the risk of falling in a mere skirmish. Give me your word of honour that you will not command this sortie, or I remain on the rampart, half dead with fatigue though I am."

"If that is the case, M. l'Amiral," said Théligny, bowing, "retire, take some repose, and allow me to conduct this enterprise: I pledge you my word not to leave the city gate."

"I count on your word, monsieur," said Coligny, gravely.

Then, as if he wished to have it understood that the gravity of his voice and face was only due to this recommendation not to leave the city, —

"As for myself, my dear Théligny," he added, "I do not intend returning to the governor's palace, as it is too far from here; I shall go to M. Jarnac's, throw myself on a bed, and sleep for an hour or two. You 'll find me there."

"Rest easy, M. l'Amiral," replied Théligny; "I watch."

The admiral descended the rampart in front of the tower of Guise, and entered into the second house of the Rue de Rémicourt, which was the one inhabited by M. de Jarnac.

Théligny followed him with his eyes; then, turning towards an ensign, —

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"Thirty or forty men of good will of the Company of the Dauphin!" he said.

"You shall have them on the instant, lieutenant!" replied the ensign.

"How can that be? I did not give any order until now."

"It is true; but M. de Coligny's words were caught on the wing by a person who happened to be near you. This person at once ran to the barracks, shouting, 'Dauphins! Dauphins! to battle!'"

"And what sort of a man is this who has so well executed my orders before they were given?"

"By my faith," replied the ensign, laughing, "he looks much more like a devil than a man: the half of his face is covered with a bloody bandage, his hair is burned down to the skull, his cuirass is full of holes before and behind, and his clothes are in rags!"

"Ah! very well," said Théligny; "I know the fellow. You are right; he is not a man, he is a devil!"

"And look, lieutenant, there he is," said the ensign.

And he pointed to a horseman coming at full gallop from the gate of Isle.

It was Malemort, half burned, half drowned, half stunned in the sortie of the evening before, and who, feeling only the better for it all, was insisting on a new sortie.

At the same time, from the opposite side, — that is to say, debouching on the Rue du Billon, at the extremity of which was a barracks, — a little band of forty horsemen was advancing.

With the activity which distinguished him when there was question of giving or receiving blows, Malemort had found time to run to the quarter, make known the intentions of the admiral, gain the gate of Isle, saddle his horse, and return to the gate of Rémicourt, where he arrived, as we see, at the same time as the horsemen of the Dauphin's Company.

All the return he asked for the zeal and activity he had

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just displayed was the favour of being allowed to form part of the expedition, and this was granted him.

Moreover, he had declared that if he were not allowed to join the principal sortie, he would make one on his own account; and if the gates were not opened for him, he would jump down from the rampart.

Only Théligny, who knew what he was from having seen him at work the evening before, advised him not to separate from the principal body and to charge in the ranks.

Malemort promised all he was asked to do.

The gate was opened, and the little troop issued forth.

But no sooner was Malemort outside of the gate than he rode in a straight line across the country at a furious gallop, and shouting, "Battle!" being carried away by the fury which possessed him, and not being able to restrict himself to the road followed by his companions, which, under cover of trees and from the favourable lay of the ground, was to bring the forty horsemen quite close to the Spanish post.

During this time the admiral, as he had expressed his intention of doing, had retired to the house of M. de Jarnac, and thrown himself on a bed; but, harassed by a sort of presentiment, and, in spite of his fatigue not being able to sleep, he got up at the end of half an hour, and, thinking he heard cries from the rampart, he seized his sword and scabbard and went out hastily.

He had scarcely taken twenty steps in the Rue de Rémicourt when he saw MM. de Luzarches and de Jarnac running towards him. It was easy guessing from their alarmed appearance that something serious had occurred.

"Ah!" said M. de Jarnac, "you know already?"

"Know what?" asked Coligny.

The two officers looked at each other.

"You did not know," said M. de Luzarches; "why, then, did you come out?"

"I could not sleep; I felt a kind of presentiment. When I heard cries I rose, and so here I am."

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"Come, then!"

And the two officers rapidly ascended the rampart with the admiral.

The rampart was thronged with spectators.

This is what had taken place.

The premature attack of Malemort had given the alarm. The Spanish post was more numerous than had been imagined; the soldiers and officers of the Dauphin's Company, who thought they were going to surprise the enemy, found the enemy on horseback, and double their number. At this sight the charge slackened; some horsemen turned rein, the cowardly abandoning the brave. The latter were engaged with forces so superior in numbers that without reinforcements they must give way. Théligny forgot his word pledged to the admiral: with no weapon but his sword, he jumped on the first horse within his reach, dashed through the gate, and called on those who had turned rein not to desert their companions; some of them rallied to him, and with nine or ten men he threw himself into the middle of the Spaniards, hoping to make a diversion.

An instant after, all that was left of the forty troopers was flying towards the city.

Their number was diminished by a third, and M. de Théligny was not with them.

It was then MM. de Jarnac and de Luzarches, judging it necessary to inform the admiral of this new check, had run to the house in which he was supposed to be taking a little rest, and had met him halfway from it.

All three were now on the rampart commanding the theatre of the catastrophe.

Coligny questioned the fugitives; they told him what we have just related.

They could tell nothing certain about M. de Théligny: they had seen him fall on the Spaniards like a thunderbolt, and strike the Spanish officer on the face with his sword; but he was then at once surrounded, and as he did not carry

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any offensive weapon, he fell at the end of a few seconds, pierced with wounds.

But one soldier insisted that, all weaponless and wounded as M. de Théligny was, that brave officer was still alive, because he saw him make a movement as if to call for help at the moment he was galloping by him.

Although the hope was a feeble one, the admiral ordered the officers of the Dauphin's Company to make an effort, at any risk, to bring back M. de Théligny, dead or alive.

The officers wanted nothing better than the chance of avenging their comrade; they were already making for the barracks, when a sort of Goliath issued from the crowd, and, bearing his hand to his helmet, said, —

"Excuse me, Meinherr Admiral; there is no need of a company to find the poor lieutenant. If you like, Meinherr Admiral, I and my nephew Franz will go in search of him, and are sure to bring him back, dead or alive!"

The admiral turned towards the author of this worthy proposal: he was one of those adventurers he had taken into his service without reckoning too much on them, but who, in the few encounters he witnessed them in, had certainly done noble service.

He recognised Heinrich Scharfenstein; four paces behind him Franz was standing, like his shadow, in the same attitude.

He had seen both the evening before, each defending one of the breaches of the Faubourg d'Isle; a glance had been enough to enable him to judge of their value.

"Yes, my brave fellow, I accept. What do you ask for this?"

"I ask a horse for myself, and another for my nephew Franz."

"But that is not what I mean."

"Well, let us see. Yes, I want two men to ride behind us."

"Be it so; what next?"

"Next? That 's all. Except it would be well to have the horses fat and the men lean."

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"Well, you can choose the men and horses yourself."

"Good!" said Heinrich.

"But I meant about the reward."

"Oh! as for the money part, that 's Procope's affair."

"Procope has nothing to do with this," said the admiral. "I promise for Théligny alive, a gratuity of fifty crowns, and for Théligny dead, a gratuity of twenty-five."

"Oh, oh!" said Heinrich, laughing with his big laugh, "I 'll search as long as you like at such a price as that!"

"Well, then, go," said the admiral, "and lose no time!"

"At once, Meinherr Admiral! at once!"

And, in fact, Heinrich began at once to select the horses. The ones he preferred were the heavy cavalry animals, stoutly built, vigorous, and solid on their limbs.

Then he began the inspection of men.

Suddenly he uttered an exclamation of joy; he had just perceived Lactance on one side, and Fracasso on the other. A penitent and a poet were the two leanest things Heinrich knew in the world.

The admiral did not know what to think of all these preparations; but he felt he might rely, if not on the intelligence, at least on the instinct of the two giants. The four adventurers descended the talus of the rampart, disappeared under the vault of the gate of Rémicourt; then, a moment after, the gate being opened for them, they reappeared, two on each horse, but taking all the precautions as to shade and shelter possible, — advantages neglected by Malemort.

Then they were lost behind a little eminence rising to the right of the mill of La Couture.

It would be impossible to express the interest that attached to this expedition of four men going to dispute a dead body with a whole army, for the opinion of the least pessimistic was now that Théligny must be really dead.

So that the silence observed by the three or four hundred persons packed on the rampart as long as the four

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adventurers were in sight continued after they disappeared behind the hill.

It almost looked as if this crowd feared, by a word, by a breath, by a movement, to awaken the watchfulness of the enemy.

At the end of an instant a volley was heard from eight or ten arquebuses.

Every heart gave a bound.

Almost at the same moment Franz Scharfenstein reappeared, carrying, not a man, but two men, in his arms.

Behind him the cavalry and infantry of the expedition was defending the retreat.

The cavalry was composed only of a horse and a man; doubtless, one of the two horses had been slain by the discharge they had just heard.

The infantry consisted of Fracasso and Lactance, each armed with an arquebuse.

Eight or ten Spanish troopers harassed the retreat. But when the infantry was too closely pressed, Heinrich made a charge and saved it by the terrible blows he dealt with his club; on the other hand, if it was the cavalry that was too closely pressed, two shots fired from two arquebuses with remarkable symmetry and unity, laid two Spaniards low, and gave Heinrich time to breathe.

However, Franz was gaining ground, and in a few seconds, thanks to his enormous strides, he found himself beyond the reach of all pursuit.

There was a cry of joy and admiration when he began climbing the talus, bearing in his arms these two bodies, living men or corpses, as a nurse would have borne two children.

He laid one half of his burden at the feet of the admiral.

"That is yours," he said; "he is not quite dead."

"And the other?" he said, pointing to the second wounded man.

"Oh, the other," said Franz, "doesn't matter. It's Malemort. He'll be himself in a minute. He is the devil himself; nothing can kill him."

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And he laughed that laugh peculiar to uncle and nephew, which might have been called the laugh of the Scharfensteins.

At this moment, the three other adventurers, cavalry and infantry, amid wild cheering, entered the city.

Théligny, as Franz Scharfenstein said, was not yet dead, although pierced by seven sword-thrusts and three balls. His condition was easily seen, the Spaniards having stripped him to his shirt and left him where he fell, being quite certain he would never rise again.

He was carried immediately to M. de Jarnac's, and laid on the bed, where the admiral an hour before had not been able to rest, being disturbed by a presentiment of what had happened.

There, as if the wounded man had only waited for this moment, he opened his eyes, looked around him, and recognised the admiral.

"A doctor! a doctor!" cried Coligny, quickly, grasping at a hope which he had entirely given up until now; but Théligny stretched out his hand to him, —

"Thanks, M. l'Amiral," he said; "God permits me to open my eyes once more and recover my voice in order to ask you very humbly to pardon me for having disobeyed you."

The admiral stopped him.

"Ah, my dear Théligny," said he, "it is not for you to ask my pardon, for if you have disobeyed me, it has been through excessive zeal for the king's service; but if you are as bad as you think, and if you have anything to ask, ask it of God."

"Oh, monsieur!" said Théligny, "I have happily to ask pardon of God only for those faults which a gentleman may confess; while by disobeying you I have committed a grave offence against discipline. Forgive me then, M. l'Amiral, so that I may die tranquil."

M. de Coligny, a warm appreciator of all true courage, felt the tears coming to his eyes on hearing this young

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officer, who was on the point of abandoning a life so full of fair promise, apparently only troubled by a moment's forgetfulness of the orders of his general.

"Since you insist on it," he said, "I pardon you a fault of which every brave soldier ought to be proud, and if this alone disturbs your last hour, die tranquilly and in peace, as died the Chevalier Bayard, the model of us all!"

And he bent down to imprint a kiss on the pale brow of the dying young soldier.

The latter made an effort, and rose.

The lips of the admiral touched the forehead of the young officer, who murmured, —

"Thanks!"

And he fell back, breathing a sigh.

It was his last.

"Gentlemen," said Coligny, wiping away a tear, and addressing those who surrounded him, "there is a brave soldier the less in the world. May God grant us all such a death!"

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XI.

THE AWAKING OF M. LE CONNÉTABLE.

Glorious as had been the two checks encountered by the admiral, they were not the less checks, and showed him the absolute necessity of being promptly reinforced in face of such a numerous army and such active vigilance.

Consequently he took advantage of the fact that the absence of the English army still left one entire side of the city free to send messengers to his uncle, the constable, in order to obtain the largest reinforcements possible. For this purpose he summoned Maldent and Yvonnet to his presence, — Yvonnet, who had been the guide of poor Théligny, and Maldent, who had been his own guide.

The constable must be either at Ham or at La Fère; one of the two messengers would therefore go to Ham, the other to La Fère, to carry news to the constable and point out the best means of succouring Saint-Quentin.

This means, which the absence of the English army rendered easy, consisted simply in despatching a strong column by the Savy highway, which terminates at the Faubourg Ponthoille; while as soon as it made its appearance, Coligny would make a sortie from the opposite side of the city and keep the attention of the enemy engaged until the advancing column made its way safely into Saint-Quentin.

The two messengers started the same evening, bearing each a pressing request, the one on the part of Malemort, the other on that of the despairing Gudule.

Malemort had received a sword-thrust in his side; luckily it had passed through an old scar, — a thing which

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almost always happened to him, for there was hardly a part of his body that did not show a cicatrice. Malemort entreated his comrade to bring back with him certain herbs absolutely necessary for the renewal of that famous balm of Ferragus, of which he consumed such awful quantities.

Gudule, who had received through the heart a thrust in a certain sense more painful and deadly than that of Malemort, recommended Yvonnet to watch with the greatest care over a life with which hers was bound up. While waiting for the return of her beloved Yvonnet, she would pass all her nights at her window looking out upon the rampart of the Vieux-Marché.

Our two adventurers left through the gate of Ponthoille; then, when they had travelled together nearly half a league on the road to Ham, Yvonnet struck across the country to reach the road to La Fère, whilst Maldent continued on that of Ham.

Yvonnet passed the Somme between Gauchy and Gruoïs, and got on the La Fère route at Cérisy.

As it is at La Fère the constable is staying, we shall follow Yvonnet rather than Maldent.

At three in the morning, Yvonnet knocked at the gate of the city, which refused obstinately to open; however, the porter, learning that a night visitor had arrived from Saint-Quentin, at last drew it back sufficiently to let him slip through.

The order had been given by the constable to admit without delay any messenger coming from his nephew, and bring him before him, whatever the hour might be.

At half-past three in the morning, the constable was roused from slumber.

The old soldier was lying in a bed, — a luxury he rarely allowed himself during a campaign; but he had under the pillow his constable's sword, and on a chair close to the bed, his armour and helmet; which indicated that on the slightest alarm he would be able to attack an enemy or defend himself.

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Those who served under him were, moreover, accustomed to be summoned at all hours of the day or night, either to give their opinion or to receive his orders.

Yvonnet was received into the chamber of the indefatigable old man, who, knowing a messenger had arrived, was waiting for this messenger, half raised up and leaning on his elbow.

Hardly did he hear the footsteps of Yvonnet than, with his ordinary brutality, he said, —

"Come forward here at once, rascal!"

It was not a time for the display of tender sensibilities. Yvonnet came forward.

"Closer, closer," said the constable, "until I see the whites of your eyes, knave! I like to look at those I am speaking to."

Yvonnet advanced to the side of the bed.

"Here I am, monseigneur," said he.

"Ah! there you are; how fortunate!"

He took his lamp and gazed on the adventurer with an expression that did not show the inspection was favourable.

"I have seen that sharper's face somewhere already," said the constable, speaking to himself.

Then to Yvonnet, —

"Are you going to give me the trouble of finding out where I have met you, rascal? Come, tell me at once; you must remember."

"And why should I remember better than you, monseigneur?" not being able to resist the temptation of addressing a question in his turn to the constable.

"Because," replied the old soldier, "you see a constable of France by chance once in your life, whilst I see every day a heap of rogues like you."

"You are correct, monseigneur," replied Yvonnet. "Well, you saw me in presence of the king."

"What!" said the constable; "in presence of the king? You visit the king, then, villain?"

"I have done so at least on the day I had the honour of

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seeing you there, M. le Connétable," answered Yvonnet, with the most exquisite politeness.

"Hum!" muttered the constable. "In fact, I remember; you were with a young officer whom my nephew sent to the king."

"With M. de Théligny."

"That 's so," said the constable. "And are things going on all right yonder?"

"On the contrary, M. le Connétable, things are going all wrong."

"How all wrong? Take care of what you say, rascal!"

"I am about to say the truth, monseigneur. The day before yesterday we had, after a sortie at the Faubourg d'Isle, about sixty men placed *hors de combat*. Yesterday, in trying to carry a Spanish position in front of the Rémicourt gate, we lost fifteen troopers of the Dauphin's Company and their lieutenant, M. de Théligny — "

"Théligny!" interrupted the constable, who believed himself invulnerable, after surviving so many engagements, battles, and skirmishes. "Théligny let himself be killed? The fool! What next?"

"The next, M. le Connétable, is a letter from M. l'Amiral, asking speedy succour."

"You should have begun with that, knave!" said the constable, tearing the letter out of the hand of the adventurer.

And he read it, all the time interrupting himself to give orders, as was his habit, —

"'I shall hold the Faubourg d'Isle as long as I can — '

"And he will do well, *mordieu!* Some one send me M. Dandelot!

"'— for from the heights of the faubourg a battery of artillery can sweep the Rémicourt rampart its entire length, from the Tower à l'Eau to the Red Tower.'

"Tell Maréchal de Saint-André to come here!

"'But in order to defend the Faubourg d'Isle and the other points threatened, I shall need a reinforcement of

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two thousand men at least, having in reality but five or six hundred under my orders.'

"*Corbleu!* he must have four thousand! I wish to see the Duc d'Enghien at once! By what right do these gentlemen sleep when I am awake? M. d'Enghien immediately! Let us see what my nephew has to say further!

"'I have only sixteen pieces of cannon and forty cannoniers; I have only fifty or sixty arquebuses; finally, I have only ammunition for a fortnight and provisions for three weeks.'

"How! is all this true?" cried the constable.

"The exact truth every word, monseigneur," replied Yvonnet, graciously.

"Indeed! I should like to see a scoundrel of your kind give the lie to my nephew. Hum!"

And the constable glared ferociously on Yvonnet.

Yvonnet bowed and took a step backwards.

"Why do you step back?" asked the constable.

"Because I think monseigneur has no more questions to ask me."

"You are mistaken. Come here!"

Yvonnet resumed his place.

"How do the bourgeois conduct themselves?" asked the constable.

"Most excellently, monseigneur."

"The rascals! I should like to see them do otherwise!"

"Even the very monks have taken up arms."

"The hypocrites! And you say they fight?"

"Like lions. And as to the women, monseigneur—"

"They whine and weep and tremble, eh? It is all the jades are good for."

"On the contrary, monseigneur, they encourage the combatants, nurse the wounded, and bury the dead."

"The trollops!"

At this moment the door opened, and a gentleman all armed, except his head, which was covered with a velvet cap, made his appearance on the threshold.

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"Ah, come here, M. Dandelot!" said the constable. "Here is your brother making such an outcry in his city of Saint-Quentin that one would think somebody was going to cut his throat."

"Monseigneur," said M. Dandelot, laughing, "if your nephew, my brother, is making such an outcry, you know him well enough to be sure it is not from fear."

"Oh, yes, *morbleu!* I know something is wrong, and that's what annoys me. So I have summoned you and M. le Maréchal de Saint-André."

"Here I am, monseigneur," interrupted the marshal, appearing in turn at the entrance to the room.

"Good, good, marshal; but M. d'Enghien is apparently not coming."

"Excuse me, monseigneur," said the duke, entering; "here I am."

"*Tripes et boyaux*, messieurs!" said the constable, hurling his rough oath the more violently at them because, as all seemed to be performing their duty, he had no excuse for gratifying the habitual ill-humour that formed the basis of his character; "*tripes et boyaux*, gentlemen, we are not in Capua, to sleep as if nothing was the matter!"

"The accusation does not touch me," said the marshal, "for I have been up already."

"And I," said the Duc d'Enghien, "have not yet been to bed."

"No; I was speaking of M. Dandelot."

"Of me!" said Dandelot; "pardon me, monseigneur; I have been making the rounds, and have been here before these gentlemen. I was on horseback when I met them, and have come here on horseback."

"Then I suppose I must be speaking of myself," said Montmorency. "It seems I am now old and good-for-nothing, since I am the only one who has been in bed. *Tête et sang!*"

"But, constable," returned Dandelot, laughing, "who the devil has said such a thing?"

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"No one, I hope; for I would break his jaw, as I broke the jaw of that ill-omened prophet I met on the highway the other day. But we have something else to attend to. We have to see how we can help this poor Coligny who has fifty thousand men pegging away at him. Fifty thousand men! What do you say to it? In my opinion, my nephew is afraid and sees double."

The three officers smiled at the same time and with the same expression.

"If my brother says fifty thousand men," said Dandelot, "there are fifty thousand men, monseigneur."

"And more likely sixty thousand than fifty thousand," said the marshal.

"And what do you think, M. d'Enghien?"

"Of course the same as those gentlemen do, M. le Connétable."

"Then you are as usual of an opinion directly opposed to mine?"

"No, monseigneur," replied Dandelot; "but we are of the opinion that the admiral tells the truth."

"Well, are you ready to run some risk to help the admiral?"

"I am ready to risk my life," answered Dandelot.

"And we also," replied the Maréchal de Saint-André and the Duc d'Enghien in the same tone.

"Then all is well," said the constable.

After this, turning round towards the ante-chamber, in which there was a great noise, —

"*Corbleu!*" he exclaimed, "where does all that racket come from?"

"Monseigneur," said one of the sub-officers of the guard, "it is a man who has just been arrested at the gate of Ham."

"Off with him to prison, then!"

"It is thought he is a soldier disguised as a peasant."

"Have him hanged!"

"But he appeals to M. l'Amiral, and says he has come from him."

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"Has he a letter or safe-conduct?"

"No, and that is why we thought he might be a spy."

"Let him be broken on the wheel!"

"An instant!" cried a voice in the ante-chamber; "even M. le Connétable cannot break people on the wheel in that fashion."

And after some clamour and a noise indicating there had been a struggle, a man rushed from the ante-chamber into the room.

"Ah!" cried Yvonnet, "take care of what you do, monseigneur; it is Maldent."

"Maldent; what has that to do with it?" asked the constable.

"It is the second messenger sent by M. l'Amiral, and who, having set out from Saint-Quentin at the same time as I, arrives naturally two hours after me, having come by Ham."

And in fact it was Maldent, who, not finding the constable at Ham, had taken a horse and galloped to La Fère, fearing that some obstacle might have stopped Yvonnet on the road.

Now how was it that Maldent, who had started dressed as a soldier, and with a letter from the admiral, arrived dressed as a peasant and without a letter? It is a problem which our readers, with their customary perspicacity, will be able to solve in one of the following chapters.

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XII.

THE ESCALADE.

Let our readers not be surprised at seeing us follow, with a minuteness belonging to the historian rather than to the romancer, all the details, every point in the attack and defence, of that glorious siege of Saint-Quentin, — a siege equally glorious for besieger and besieged.

Moreover, in our opinion, the glory of a country is made up of its defeats quite as much as of its victories; the glory of our triumphs is enhanced by that of our reverses.

What people, in fact, would not have succumbed after Crécy, Poitiers, Agincourt, Pavia, Saint-Quentin, or Waterloo? But the hand of God was over France, and after each fall France rose greater than she was before.

It was after bending eight times under his cross that Jesus saved the world.

France, under this relation, may be considered, if we are permitted to say so, the Christ of nations.

Saint-Quentin is nevertheless one of the stations on her way of the cross.

Her cross was the monarchy.

Happily behind the monarchy was the people.

This time again, behind the fallen monarchy, we are about to see the people standing.

During the night following the departure of Yvonnet and Maldent, the admiral was warned that the sentinels mounting guard at the Faubourg d'Isle believed they heard the sound of sappers at work.

Coligny rose and ran to the threatened point.

The admiral was an experienced captain. He leaped from his horse, lay down on the rampart, placed his ear to the ground, and listened.

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Then, rising, —

"It is not," he said, "the noise of sappers; it is the rolling of cannon. The enemy is about to erect a battery against us."

The officers looked at one another.

Then Jarnac advanced and said, —

"You know, M. l'Amiral, that it is the opinion of every one the place is not tenable?"

The admiral smiled.

"It is mine also, gentlemen," said he; "and yet, you see, we have held it for the last five days. If, when urged by you, I had retreated, the Faubourg d'Isle would have been in the hands of the Spaniards for the last five days, and all their preparations for attacking the city on this side completed. Now let us not forget this, gentlemen: every day gained is as useful to us as are the last breathing spells to the stag pursued by the hunters."

"Then your opinion is, monseigneur?"

"My opinion is that we have done on this side all that it is humanly possible to do, and that we must carry in another direction our energy, devotion, and vigilance."

The officers acquiesced with a bow.

"At daybreak," continued Coligny, "the Spanish cannon will be formed in battery, and the firing will begin; at daybreak, therefore, all the artillery we have here, as well as all the ammunition, balls, bales of wool, carts, hand-barrows, pickaxes, and pioneers' tools, must be in the city. One part of our men will attend to this; another will pile up fagots and fascines in the houses, and set them on fire; I shall myself protect the retreat of our soldiers and cut the bridges behind them."

Then when he saw around him the poor unfortunates to whom these houses belonged, and who were listening to him with an expression of despair, —

"My friends," said he, "if your houses were spared by us, they would be demolished by the Spaniards, who would use the wood and stone for constructing masks and digging

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their trenches; sacrifice them, therefore, in the name of your king and country. I assign to you the task of setting them on fire."

The inhabitants of the Faubourg d'Isle looked at one another, exchanged some words in a low tone, and one of them, advancing, said, —

"M. l'Amiral, my name is Guillaume Pauquet; you see my house from here. It is the largest in the quarter. I shall set fire to it with my own hands; and my neighbours and friends, here present, are prepared to do to theirs what I am about to do to mine."

"Is this true, my children?" said the admiral, with tears in his eyes.

"Is what you demand for the good of the king and country, M. l'Amiral?"

"If we can only hold out for a fortnight, my friends, France is saved!" said Coligny.

"And to hold out even for ten days, must we burn our houses?"

"I believe, my friends, it is necessary."

"Then, if the houses are burned, you promise to hold out for ten days?"

"I promise, my friends, to do all that a gentleman devoted to my king and country can do," said the admiral. "Whoever speaks of surrender shall be thrown over the walls by me; and if I speak of surrender, do the same to me."

"It is well, M. l'Amiral," said one of the inhabitants of the faubourg; "since you order us to burn our houses, we are going to set them on fire."

"But," said a voice, "I hope the abbey of Saint-Quentin-en-Isle may be spared."

The admiral turned in the direction of the voice, and recognised Lactance.

"Saint-Quentin-en-Isle less than all the rest," answered the admiral. "The rampart of Rémicourt is commanded from the platform of Saint-Quentin-en-Isle; and a battery of cannon established there would render the defence of the rampart impossible."

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Lactance raised his eyes to heaven, and heaved a profound sigh.

"Besides," continued the admiral, smiling, "Saint-Quentin is, above all, guardian of the city, and he will not take umbrage at our ruining his abbey to save his clients."

Then, taking advantage of this moment of good-will which seemed to inspire all and each with the same devotion, he ordered the cannon to be drawn to the city, as well as the different objects mentioned by him, and everything to be done in the greatest possible silence.

This work was begun with as much zeal, it must be said, as was displayed by those carrying fascines into their houses; men harnessed themselves cheerfully and courageously to the cannon and carts, and set to work hauling them into the city.

At two in the morning all was finished; and there remained behind the old wall only the number of arquebusiers necessary to deceive the enemy into the belief that it was still defended, and the men who, with torch in hand, were ready to set fire to their houses.

At daybreak, as the admiral had foreseen, the enemy fired the first volley. A breaching battery had been established during the night, and it was the noise made by the men forming it the admiral had heard.

This first volley was the signal agreed on for setting fire to the houses. Not one of the inhabitants hesitated; each applied his torch, and in a moment a curtain of smoke rose in the sky, soon to be succeeded by a curtain of flame.

The faubourg was burning from the church of Saint-Eloi to the church of Saint-Pierre-au-Canal; but in the midst of this immense furnace, the abbey of Saint-Quentin remained intact, as if some superhuman power had turned the conflagration aside from it.

Three times did citizens and soldiers and workmen, through fire, and over the flying bridges, — for the others had been cut down, — renew the attempt to destroy it, and three times did the attempt fail.

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The admiral from the top of the gate of Isle was watching the progress of the flames, when Jean Pauquet, separating from those around him and approaching the admiral with his woollen cap in his hand, said, —

"Monseigneur," said he, "an old man of the city says he has heard his father tell of a storehouse of powder existing in one of the two towers flanking the gate of Isle, if not in both."

"Good!" said the admiral, "we must see to this. Where are the keys?"

"Ah, the keys!" said Jean Pauquet, "who can know anything about them? The doors have not been opened for the last hundred years, perhaps."

"Then we must get levers and crowbars to open them."

"They are not needed," said a voice; "let me drive against the door, and the door will open."

And Heinrich Scharfenstein, followed by his nephew Franz, advanced three steps towards Coligny.

"Ah, it is you, my brave giant?" said the admiral.

"Yes, I and my nephew Franz."

"Well, push, my friend! push!" And the two Scharfensteins approached each a folding-door, buttressed himself against it, and with the same mechanical action and the same movement, counted: —

"*Ein! zwei! drei!*"

And at the word *drei*, each, making a mighty effort, drove in the leaf he was planted against, and so successfully that each fell with it.

Only as the resistance offered by the doors was different, Franz fell headlong his whole length, while Heinrich was lucky enough to fall on his hips.

But both rose up with their customary gravity, saying, —

"Now!"

They entered the towers.

One of them, as Jean Pauquet had stated, did in fact contain two or three thousand pounds of powder; but, as he had also said, this powder had been there so long that when the kegs were lifted they fell into dust.

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The admiral then ordered sheets to be brought and the powder to be transported to the arsenal.

As soon as he saw the order was being executed, he returned to breakfast and to get a little rest, having been on his feet since midnight, and eaten nothing since the evening before.

He had just sat down to table when it was announced that one of the messengers sent by him to the constable had returned and asked to speak to him without delay.

It was Yvonnet.

Yvonnet announced that the succours demanded by him would arrive the next day, under the command of M. Dandelot, Maréchal de Saint-André and the Duc d'Enghien.

They were to consist of four thousand foot-soldiers, who would follow the Savy route, as the admiral suggested, and enter by the Faubourg de Ponthoille.

Maldent had remained at La Fère to act as guide to M. Dandelot.

Yvonnet was at this stage of his recital and had raised a glass of wine poured out for him to drink to the health of the admiral, when all at once the earth trembled, the walls shook, the glass of the windows flew in pieces, and a roar was heard like that of a hundred pieces of cannon discharged at the same time.

The admiral rose; Yvonnet, seized with one of his nervous movements, rested his glass, still full, on the table.

At the same time a cloud passed over the city, borne by the west wind, and a strong stench of sulphur spread into the room through the broken glass.

"Oh, the unhappy men!" cried the admiral; "they did not take the proper precautions, and the powder has blown up!"

Immediately, without waiting for news, he left the house and ran to the gate of Isle.

All the population was hurrying to the same quarter; it was useless for Coligny to make inquiries; these people

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were hurrying in the direction of the noise, but were ignorant of its cause.

Coligny was not mistaken; the interior of the tower was gutted and smoking like the crater of a volcano. A spark from the immense conflagration in the neighbourhood had entered through an embrasure, and set fire to the terrible combustible.

Forty or fifty persons had perished; five officers had disappeared.

The tower offered a breach to the enemy by which twenty-five assailants could mount in a line.

Fortunately, the veil of smoke and flame between the faubourg and city concealed this breach from the Spaniards. The devotion of the inhabitants, who had set fire to their houses, had then saved the city.

Coligny understood the danger: he appealed to the good-will of all; but the bourgeois alone responded. The soldiers who had been withdrawn from the faubourg had gone away to rest and refresh themselves.

Among those who had done so were the two Scharfensteins; but as their tent was only about fifty yards from the theatre of the event, they were among the first to answer the appeal of the admiral.

Two precious auxiliaries were uncle Heinrich and nephew Franz under the circumstances; their herculean strength, their gigantic stature, made them fit for everything. They took off their jackets, turned up their sleeves, and became masons.

Three hours after, whether it were that the enemy knew nothing of what had occurred or was preparing another enterprise, the tower was repaired without any opposition and rendered almost as solid as before.

All that day — it was the 7th of August — passed without the enemy making the slightest demonstration; he seemed to confine himself to a simple blockade. Without doubt, he was awaiting the arrival of the English army.

During the evening, the sentinels noticed some movement in the direction of the Faubourg d'Isle.

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The Spaniards of Carondelet and Julian Romeron, taking advantage of the dying out of the conflagration, were beginning to appear in the faubourg and draw near the city.

Thereupon all the watchfulness of the besieged was exercised on that side.

In the evening at ten, the admiral called a council of the chief officers of the garrison; he announced that the expected reinforcement would, in all probability, arrive that night. The wall must be secretly manned from Tourival to the gate of Ponthoille, in order to hold themselves in readiness to bring aid, if necessary, to Dandelot and his men.

Yvonnet, who, in his capacity as messenger, had been initiated into all these arrangements, was delighted with them, and as far as lay in his power — for his peculiar knowledge of certain localities gave him considerable influence — he pushed his nocturnal investigations in the direction of the Rémicourt, Isle, and Ponthoille gates.

This new disposition, in fact, left the rampart of the Vieux-Marché entirely free from troops, except a few sentinels; and it was there, as the reader will recall, that the house of Jean Pauquet was situated, and especially the little pavilion inhabited by Mademoiselle Gudule.

Consequently, about eleven, on one of those gloomy nights so esteemed and blest by lovers on the way to their mistresses, and by warriors preparing a surprise, our adventurer, followed by Heinrich and Franz, armed, like him, to the teeth, was advancing cautiously through the Rue des Rosiers, de la Fosse, and de Saint-Jean, which latter connects — at about a hundred yards from the tower Dameuse — with the rampart of the Vieux-Marché.

The three adventurers followed this road because they knew all the space extending between the tower Dameuse and the gate of the Vieux-Marché was free from sentinels, the enemy not having yet made any demonstration on this side.

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The boulevard was therefore gloomy and deserted.

Why was this band, which, in spite of its formidable appearance, had not any hostile appearance, composed of Heinrich and Franz on the one side and of Yvonnet on the other?

By that natural law which decrees that in this world weakness must seek strength, and strength must love weakness.

With whom, among his eight companions, was Yvonnet most closely united? With Heinrich and Franz. Why? Because they were the strongest, and he was the weakest.

As soon as the two Scharfensteins had a moment to themselves, whose society did they run to seek?

Yvonnet's.

Consequently, when Yvonnet needed help, whose help did he seek?

That of the two Scharfensteins.

Under his garb, always so carefully attended to, always so elegant and dainty, and contrasting so strangely with the rough, soldierly dress of the two giants, Yvonnet, when followed by them, resembled some aristocratic child holding two mastiffs in leash.

It was, as we have said, because of this attraction of weakness for strength, and this sympathy of strength for weakness, that on this very evening, Yvonnet asked the two Scharfensteins to come along with him, and that the latter, as usual, answered, as they rose and armed themselves, —

"Very willingly, Meinherr Yvonnet."

For the two Scharfensteins addressed Yvonnet as *Meinherr*, — a distinction they did not grant to any other of their companions.

It was because their affection for Yvonnet was mingled with a profound respect.

Never did uncle or nephew presume to speak first in the presence of the young adventurer; no, they heard him talk of fine women, fine arms, fine dress, satisfied to give a nod

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of assent, or breaking into one of their big laughs, when an evident witticism claimed such attention.

Where Yvonnet was going when Yvonnet said, "Come with me!" concerned them little; he said, "Come!" that was enough, and they followed this charming star of their fancy as satellites follow a planet.

This evening, Yvonnet was going to his mistress; he had said to the two Scharfensteins, "Come!" and, as we see, they came.

But with what object, since the presence of a third party at such a rendezvous is always annoying, did Yvonnet ask for the company of the two giants?

In the first place, let us hasten to say that the brave Germans were not troublesome witnesses. They closed one eye, they closed two, they closed three, they closed four, on a word, a sign, a gesture from their comrade, and kept them religiously closed until a word, a sign, or a gesture of their comrade allowed them to open them.

Yvonnet brought them with him because, it will be remembered, to reach the window of Gudule's pavilion he needed a ladder; and, instead of taking a ladder, he found it simpler to take the two Scharfensteins, which absolutely amounted to the same thing.

The young man had, as may be imagined, a collection of signals, sounds, and cries, by the aid of which he announced his arrival to his mistress; but this evening he needed not signal nor sound nor cry, — Gudule was at her window, expecting him.

Nevertheless, when she saw three men coming instead of one, she prudently retreated.

But when Yvonnet separated from his companions, he was recognised; and the young girl, still trembling, but no longer frightened, came back to the window.

Yvonnet explained in two words the danger a soldier ran in a besieged city walking with a ladder on his back; a patrol might believe he carried the ladder with the view of communicating with the besiegers. Once such a belief

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settled in the mind of the patrol, it would be necessary to have explanations with the patrol's officer, with the captain, perhaps with the governor, and account for the destination of the ladder; now, however delicately these explanations might be managed, the honour of Mademoiselle Gudule would be compromised.

It was better, then, to bring two sure friends, on whose discretion he could rely, like his two comrades.

But how would these friends take the place of a ladder? This Mademoiselle Gudule had some trouble in understanding.

Yvonnet resolved to lose no time in developing his theory, but to proceed at once to a demonstration. With this object, he called the two Scharfensteins, who, opening the immense compass of their legs, were beside him in three strides.

Then he backed up the uncle against the wall, and made a sign to the nephew.

In less time than it takes to relate it, Franz placed one foot between the joined hands of his uncle and another on his shoulder; then, having reached the top of the window, he took Mademoiselle Gudule by the waist, she regarding him with much curiosity all the time; and before she could make a motion to defend herself, — a motion she would perhaps not have made, even if she had time for it, — she found herself borne from her chamber and placed on the boulevard beside Yvonnet.

"There," said Franz, laughing, "there you have the young woman you asked for."

"Thanks," said Yvonnet.

And, drawing the arm of the young woman within his own, he led her to the obscurest part of the rampart.

This was the circular summit of one of the towers, and protected by a parapet three feet high.

The two Scharfensteins sat down on a stone bench lying along the curtain.

It is not our intention to relate here the conversation of

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Mademoiselle Gudule and Yvonnet. They were young, and in love; they had not met for three nights and three days, and had so much to say that a report of their quarter of an hour's discourse would certainly exceed the limits of this chapter.

We say a quarter of an hour's, because at the end of a quarter of an hour, notwithstanding the animation of the dialogue, Yvonnet suddenly stopped, placed his hand on the pretty mouth of the young girl, leaned forward, and listened.

A sound like that made by the steady tramp of a great number of feet on the turf seemed to come to his ear as he listened.

Looking forward, he thought he saw an immense black serpent creeping up to the wall.

But the night was so dark and the noise so imperceptible that all this might be an illusion as well as a reality, especially as the sound and movement suddenly stopped.

Yvonnet looked and listened, but neither saw nor heard anything more.

Yet while holding the young girl clasped to his breast, he kept his eyes eagerly fixed on the point to which they were first directed, and stretched his neck out between the battlements.

Soon he thought he saw the gigantic serpent raise its head against the gray wall, and rise along this wall, as if to reach the parapet of the curtain.

Then, like a hydra-headed monster, the serpent darted out a second head near the first, and a third near the second.

Upon this all became clear to Yvonnet; without losing a minute, he took Gudule in his arms, and, recommending her to be silent, passed her to Franz, who, with the aid of his uncle, restored her to her chamber in the same manner in which she had been carried out of it.

Then, running to the nearest ladder, the young man

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reached it just as the first Spaniard stood upon the parapet of the curtain.

Great as was the darkness, a gleam of light could be seen through the shadow; next a cry was heard, and the Spaniard, pierced by the slender sword of Yvonnet, fell backwards from the wall.

The noise of his fall was lost in a frightful crash; it was the second ladder laden with men, which, hurled back by the sinewy arm of Heinrich, tore along the wall with a hoarse, grating sound.

On his side, Franz discovered an abandoned beam in his path; and, raising it above his head, he let it fall on the very centre of the third ladder.

The ladder was broken at a place above two thirds of its height from the ground; and men, ladder, and beam were pitched pell-mell into the fosse.

Meanwhile Yvonnet, while striking with all his might, was at the same time shouting as loudly as he could, —

"To arms! to arms!"

The two Scharfensteins ran to his aid, at the very moment two or three Spaniards had set foot on the rampart and were pressing him closely.

One of the assailants fell cloven by the enormous sword of Heinrich; another rolled senseless under the mace of Franz; the other, as he was making ready to strike Yvonnet, was seized by the waist by one of the two giants, and hurled over the wall.

At the same moment Jean and Guillaume Pauquet appeared at the extremity of the Rue du Vieux-Marché, attracted by the cries of the three adventurers, and bearing each a torch in one hand and an axe in the other.

From that moment the surprise was a failure; and in response to the united cries of the bourgeois and the adventurers, succours arrived both from the Saint-Jean tower and the big tower bordering on the Faubourg Ponthoille.

Then at the same time, and as if all these attacks had been part of one general movement, and arranged to break

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out together, the detonation of a thousand arquebuses was heard half a league away in the plain, in the direction of Savy, behind the chapel of Épargnemaille; and between the earth and the sky arose that reddish cloud which hovers above a lively fusillade.

The two enterprises — that of the Spaniards to surprise the city, and that of Dandelot to succour it — had both failed.

We have seen how chance caused the failure of that of the Spaniards; we must now tell how this same chance caused the failure of that of the French.

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THIRD PART.

I.

DOUBLE ADVANTAGE OF SPEAKING THE PICARD DIALECT.

UNTIL now we have been entirely occupied with the besieged; it is time we spent a while under the tents of the besiegers, were it only to pay them a visit.

At the moment Coligny and that group of officers at present called the staff was making the tour of the walls in order to see what means of defence the city had, another group, not less important, was riding round it on the outside, in order to discover the best method of attack.

This group was composed of Emmanuel Philibert, Count Egmont, Count Horn, Count Schwartzburg, Count Mansfeld, and Dukes Eric and Ernest of Brunswick.

Among the other officers that formed a group behind the first, was our old friend Scianca-Ferro, troubling himself, as usual, about nothing except the life and honour of his beloved Emmanuel.

By the express order of Emmanuel, Leona had remained at Cambray with the rest of the household of the duke.

The conclusion drawn from the examination was that the city, protected by miserable walls, and without either sufficient artillery or a sufficient garrison, could not hold out more than five or six days; such was the announcement made to Philip II., who had also remained at Cambray, not by superior orders, but in obedience to the supreme dictates of prudence.

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Six or seven leagues, for that matter, were all that separated the two cities; and if Emmanuel chose the abode of royalty for Leona, it was because, as he was obliged to communicate personally from time to time with Philip II. at Cambray, the generalissimo of the Spanish army calculated that each of his journeys would give him an opportunity of seeing Leona.

Leona, on her side, had consented to this separation, first and above all, because in the life of devotion, love, and self-denial she had adopted, a wish of Emmanuel became for her a command; and next, because a distance of six or seven leagues, though it created a real absence, had no effect at all in parting her from her lover, since the young girl, whenever she had the slightest grounds for anxiety, could in an hour and a half be at the camp of Emmanuel Philibert, thanks to the freedom of action the ignorance of every one, except Scianca-Ferro, as to her sex gave her.

Moreover, whatever might be Emmanuel's joy at the renewal of hostilities, — a renewal to which he had at least as much contributed by his attempts on Metz and Bordeaux as the admiral had by his attempt on Blois, — he seemed to have grown ten years older. A young captain of hardly thirty-one years, he found himself at the head of an army charged with the invasion of France, commanding all those old leaders of Charles V. and staking his own fortune behind the fortune of Spain.

In fact, on the result of the campaign now undertaken would depend his future, not only as a great general, but as a sovereign prince; it was Piedmont which he was coming to conquer anew in France. Emmanuel Philibert, though he was commander-in-chief of the Spanish armies, was always, in truth, only a species of royal *condottiere;* now a man is really something in the balance of destiny only when he has the right of having men killed on his own account.

Nevertheless, he had not to complain; Philip II., obe-

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dient, at least in this, to the advice given him by his father Charles V. on descending from the throne, with regard to matters of peace and war, had bestowed full power on the Duke of Savoy, and placed under his orders all that long list of princes and captains named by us when describing topographically the places occupied by each of them around the city.

All these thoughts, among which that of the responsibility weighing upon him was not the least, rendered Emmanuel Philibert as grave and as full of care as an old man.

He saw clearly that on the success of the siege of Saint-Quentin depended the success of the campaign. Saint-Quentin taken, there were only thirty leagues between that city and Paris and Ham, La Fère and Soissons to be captured on the way; only it was necessary to carry Saint-Quentin speedily, in order not to give France time to collect one of those armies that almost always spring up from the earth for her, in virtue of a kind of enchantment, and which, as by a miracle, make of their breast a wall of flesh, to take the place of the walls of stone destroyed by the enemy.

And so we have seen with what persistent rapidity Emmanuel Philibert pressed forward the siege, and what a strict surveillance he had established around the city.

His first idea was that the weak side of Saint-Quentin was the Porte d'Isle, and that it would be there where, on the least opportunity offered by the imprudence of the besieged, he would carry the place.

Consequently, leaving all the other chiefs to pitch their tents in front of the Rémicourt wall, which, in case of a regular siege, offered the most favourable chance for a successful attack, as we have said already, he had his erected between a mill standing on the top of a little hill and the Somme.

From there he watched the river, over which he threw a bridge, and all that vast space extending from the Somme to the old causeway of Vermand, — a space afterwards to be

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filled by the camp of the English army, as soon as it joined the Spanish and Flemish army.

We have seen how the attempt to carry the faubourg by a surprise failed.

Emmanuel Philibert then decided to risk an escalade.

This escalade was to take place on the 7th or 8th of August during the night.

What motive had Emmanuel Philibert in selecting the night of the 7th or 8th of August for this enterprise rather than any other night? This is a question we intend to answer.

On the morning of the 6th, at the moment when he was listening to the reports made to him by the different officers of patrol, a peasant of the village of Savy was brought to him, who, moreover, expressed a wish to speak to him of his own accord.

Emmanuel, knowing that a military commander ought to disdain no information, had ordered that any one desiring to see him, no matter who, should be immediately introduced into his presence.

The peasant had only to wait, therefore, until the reports were finished.

He brought to the general of the Spanish army a letter which he had found in a military doublet.

As to the military doublet, he had found it under the bed of his wife.

This letter was a duplicate of the one written by the admiral to the constable.

This doublet was Maldent's.

Now, how came it that the doublet of Maldent was found under the bed of the village peasant's wife?

This is a circumstance which we feel bound to enter into fully, as the destinies of nations sometimes depend on these sorts of threads, lighter than the gossamers that fall from the distaff of the Virgin.

After Maldent had separated from Yvonnet, he pursued his journey.

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On reaching Savy, he found himself at a corner of a street in presence of a night patrol.

To fly was impossible; he had been seen. To fly would have at once created suspicion; besides, two or three horsemen, by spurring their horses to a gallop, would easily have overtaken him.

He slipped into the doorway of a house.

"Who goes there?" cried a voice.

Maldent knew the customs of Picardy; he knew that the peasants very seldom bolted the doors of their houses. He pressed the latch; the latch gave way; the door opened.

"Is that you, my poor man?" asked a woman's voice.

"Yes; of course it is I," replied Maldent, who spoke the Picard *patois* in its purity, being a native of Noyon, one of the capitals of Picardy.

"Oh!" said the woman, "I thought you were dead!"

"Well," said Maldent, "you see I am not."

And, bolting the door, he approached the bed.

Quickly as Maldent had vanished into the house, a trooper had seen him, but without being able to tell exactly through what door he had disappeared.

Now as this man might be some spy following the patrol, the trooper, with three or four of his comrades, was already knocking at the neighbouring door; and this diligence proved to Maldent that he had no time to lose.

But Maldent was badly acquainted with his surroundings. In his ignorance and flurry he fell violently against a table covered with pots and glasses.

"What's the matter?" asked the frightened wife.

"The matter is that I stumbled," said Maldent.

"You must be very old to be so stupid!" murmured the woman.

In spite of the little politeness of the observation, the adventurer contented himself with muttering a few words of tenderness between his teeth, and, while undressing, approached the bed.

He had no doubt they would soon knock at the door

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which had just opened for him, as they had done at the neighbouring door, and he was determined that, if possible, they should not recognise him as a stranger in the house.

Now, the best way not to be recognised as a stranger in the house was to occupy the place of the master of the house.

Maldent's experience in stripping others made it an easy thing for him to strip himself; in the turn of a hand, his garments were on the ground; he kicked them under the bed, raised the coverlet, and lay down.

But it was not enough for Maldent to be taken by strangers for the master of the house; it was further necessary that the shrewish female who had just rebuked him so sharply for his awkwardness should be convinced.

Maldent recommended his soul to God, and proceeded to convince his hostess that he was not dead, as she had believed, or rather pretended to believe.

It was a way of exhibiting his proofs, as M. d'Hosier would have said, which was very pleasing to the good dame; consequently, she was the first to complain of the annoyance when, after searching the neighbouring house, occupied only by an old woman of sixty and a little girl of nine, the troopers, who were determined to find out the man of whom they had just got a glimpse, and who had been so prompt in disappearing, at last knocked at the house where Maldent had really entered.

"My God, Gosseu!" said the woman, "what's that?"

"Well," said Maldent to himself, "it seems my name is Gosseu. It is always good to learn."

Then to his hostess, —

"What 's that? Go and see for yourself."

"But, *zernidiu!* they will break in the door."

"Good! let them," replied Maldent.

And, without letting the soldiers trouble him, the adventurer continued the interrupted conversation; so that when the door gave way under the blows of the soldiers, nobody — and, for the time, the hostess less than any one — had

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the right of contesting with him the title of master of the house.

The soldiers entered swearing and cursing; but as they swore and cursed in Spanish and Maldent answered in Picard, the dialogue soon became so confused that the soldiers judged it convenient to light a candle, in order that if they did not understand they might at least see one another.

It was the critical moment; so while the soldier was striking a light, Maldent judged it prudent to explain to his hostess in as few words as possible how matters stood.

It must be said to the honour of the latter that her first impulse was not to enter into the conspiracy.

"Ah," she cried, "you are not my poor Gosseu! Get out from here quickly, you big blackguard!"

"Good!" said Maldent; "I am Gosseu, since I am in his bed."

It seems the argument appeared conclusive to the hostess of Maldent, for she did not insist further; and, after having, by the glare of the candle which had just been lit, cast a glance upon her improvised husband, she murmured, —

"For every sin there is mercy! I must not wish the death of a sinner, as says the gospel of Our Lord!"

And she turned her nose towards the wall.

Maldent also took advantage of the light to cast a look around him.

He was in the house of a well-to-do peasant, — oak table, walnut chest of drawers, serge curtains. On a chair was displayed a complete suit of Sunday clothes, all prepared, which the true Gosseu was to find on his return.

The soldiers, on their side, were looking on with eyes not less observant and quick; and as there was nothing to awaken their suspicions with respect to Maldent, they began to speak together in Spanish, but no longer threateningly, — a fact which Maldent would have easily become cognisant of, even if he had not understood Spanish almost as well as he understood Picard.

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The question discussed was the propriety of taking him for guide, the soldiers being afraid of going astray on the road between Savy and Dallon.

Seeing that he ran no other danger than this, and that this danger would even give him a splendid chance of escaping, Maldent took his share in the conversation.

"Come now, master soldiers," said he, "no need of letting your tongue sleep in your mouth. Tell me quickly what you want."

Then the leader, who spoke a little more French than the others, guessing Maldent's meaning, approached the bed and made him understand that what they wanted was for him to get up at once.

But Maldent shook his head.

"I cannot," he said.

"What! you cannot?" said the leader.

"No."

"And why no?"

"Because, while going to Bourbatrie, I fell on the way and injured my leg."

And Maldent imitated with his elbows and the upper part of his body the action of a man who limps.

"Good!" said the sergeant, "in that case you shall have a horse."

"Oh," said Maldent, "thanks! but I don't know how to ride a horse; now if it was a donkey —"

"Then you 'll learn," said the sergeant.

"No, no, no!" said Maldent, shaking his head more and more energetically; "I will not mount a horse."

"Ah, you will not mount a horse!" said the Spaniard, approaching Maldent and raising his whip; "we 'll see."

"I will mount a horse! I will mount a horse!" said Maldent, tumbling out of bed and jumping about on one foot, as if he could not put the other on the floor.

"Well and good!" said the Spaniard, "and now dress quickly."

"All right," said Maldent; "but don't shout so loud, or

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you 'll waken my poor Catherine, who is in a fever from a terrible ache in her big tooth. Sleep, my poor Catherine, sleep."

And Maldent, all the time jumping on one foot, pulled the coverlet over the head of his Catherine, who had nothing better to do than pretend to sleep.

As to Maldent, he had his own idea in covering the head of Catherine; he had caught a glimpse of the glossy new clothes of Master Gosseu, and had formed the rather uncharitable design of appropriating them, instead of the extremely ragged regimentals which he had as a matter of precaution placed under the bed.

He found a double advantage in this substitution: he would have a new doublet and a new pair of breeches instead of an old doublet and an old pair of breeches, and would be dressed as a peasant, and not as a soldier, which would render the rest of his journey much safer.

He began then to put on the Sunday clothes of poor Gosseu with as much tranquillity as if their measure had been taken for himself, and as if he had paid for them out of his own purse.

It may easily be understood, for that matter, that Catherine paid little attention to what was passing; she now only wished for one thing, and that was that her false husband should get away as speedily as possible.

Maldent, on his side, who feared the appearance of the true Gosseu on the threshold at any moment, made the best speed he could.

Even the soldiers, who were in a hurry to reach Dallon, assisted Maldent in enduing himself with the vestments of Gosseu.

At the end of ten minutes the job was done. There was something miraculous in the perfect way in which the garments of Gosseu fitted Maldent. Once dressed, Maldent took the candle, under pretence of searching for his hat; but Maldent, stumbling against a seat, let the candle fall, and it was extinguished.

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"Ah," he said, abusing himself, "there 's nothing in the world more stupid than a peasant who has no sense!"

And as if for his own satisfaction, he added in a whisper, —

"Except a soldier who thinks he has too much."

After which, in a tearful voice, —

"Good-bye, my poor Catherine," said he; "good-night. I 'm off."

And, leaning on the arm of a soldier, the false Gosseu left limping.

At the door he found a horse ready. It was a terrible task to put Maldent on horseback; he cried aloud for a donkey, — only a donkey. It took the united efforts of three soldiers to set him astride.

Once in the saddle, it was much worse. As soon as the horse threatened to trot, Maldent uttered lamentable cries, and hooked on piteously to the saddle-bows, pulling the reins back so strongly that the poor astounded horse did all he could, on his part, to get rid of so unpleasant a cavalier.

The result of all this was that the horse at the corner of a street took advantage of the fact that the sergeant had just dealt him a vigorous lash on the buttocks, and also of the fact that Maldent, at the same time, slackened the reins and dug the spurs into his sides, to set out at a headlong gallop.

Maldent called for help with all his might; but before help could reach him, horse and rider had completely vanished.

The comedy had been so well played that it was only when the noise even of the steps had died away that the Spaniards began to understand they had been duped by their guide, who, as we see, did not guide them long.

It was in this fashion Maldent arrived at La Fère, with a cavalry horse and a peasant's costume, and had narrowly escaped being imprisoned, hanged, broken on the wheel, in consequence of the anomaly existing between his mount and his garments.

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Now it remains for us to explain how the letter of Coligny had fallen into the hands of Emmanuel Philibert; this explanation will neither be so scabrous nor take so long to narrate.

Two hours after the departure of the false Gosseu, the true Gosseu returned home; he found the village in revolution and his wife in tears. Poor Catherine had related to everybody how a brigand had entered her house, — all owing to her imprudence in not bolting the door because she was expecting her husband, — and with pistol in hand had forced her to give up the clothes of Gosseu, of which, no doubt, the wretch had need, in order to escape the eye of justice; for the man capable of offering such violence to a poor woman could be nothing else but a great criminal. Thereupon, great as was the wrath of the true Gosseu at seeing himself so impudently deprived of his new clothes, he could not help consoling his wife when he saw her utter despair; then the happy thought came to him of searching the rags left in place of his brand-new Sunday clothes, as he might thereby perhaps find something which would aid him in his search for the infamous robber. And, in fact, he did find the letter addressed by the admiral to his uncle, M. de Montmorency, left by the adventurer, through forgetfulness, in his doublet; but for this forgetfulness the latter cared little, as he knew by heart and was ready to relate to the constable what it contained.

We have seen, however, that the absence of this letter was near being fatal to him.

The first idea of the true Gosseu, an honest man at bottom, had been to carry this letter to its address; but he reflected that, instead of punishing his robber, he would thus render him a service, since he would be doing the commissions the letter neglected to do, and hatred, that bad counsellor, whispered to him the inspiration to bring the letter to Emmanuel Philibert, — that is to say, to the enemy of the constable.

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In this fashion the messenger would not have the satisfaction of seeing his commission fulfilled; but, on the contrary, he would perhaps be whipped, imprisoned, put to death, as the constable would naturally suppose him to be a traitor.

We must do Gosseu the justice to say that he hesitated some time between the first impulse and the second; but, as if he already knew the axiom which M. de Talleyrand was to formulate three centuries later, he struggled victoriously against his first impulse, which was good, and had the glory of yielding to his second, which was bad.

Consequently, as soon as it was daylight, despite the prayers of his wife, who was kind enough to implore mercy for the infamous rascal, the husband set out, saying, —

"Come, come, Catherine, don't bother me any more about that knave. No, no, the thing is settled. It's in my head to see him hanged, and hanged he must be. Saint-Quentin, *tête de kien!*"

And, having made up his mind, the obstinate Picard kept to it, and brought the letter to Emmanuel Philibert, who, it is unnecessary to say, had no scruple in opening it, and saw there the itinerary traced by Coligny for the reinforcement which he begged the constable to send him.

Emmanuel Philibert liberally rewarded Gosseu, and dismissed him with a promise that he would be well avenged.

Nevertheless, as long as daylight lasted, the Duke of Savoy did not make any demonstration which would lead to the supposition that he suspected the project of the constable; but, rightly thinking that the admiral had not been content with despatching a single messenger to his uncle, and that the latter must have received at least two or three, he ordered fifty pioneers to start at nightfall, and cut wide ditches flanked by barricades on the Savy and Ham highways in the valleys of Raucourt and Saint-Phal.

Then he placed his best Spanish arquebusiers in ambush.

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The night passed without anything unusual.

Emmanuel Philibert expected as much, for he supposed correctly that the constable would need time to make his dispositions, and that the *comedy*, as the admiral said, would be for the morrow.

Consequently, on the evening of the morrow, the Spanish arquebusiers were at their post. But it was not enough to prevent succours from reaching the city.

Emmanuel Philibert believed that, in order to favour the entrance of the French into Saint-Quentin, all the garrison would be assembled at the Faubourg de Ponthoille, and that the other points would therefore be stripped; that the rampart of the Vieux-Marché particularly, not having been threatened by the fire of the Flemish batteries for the last two days, would be even more deserted than the others, and he ordered a surprise for the same night.

We have seen how chance, which had led Yvonnet thither, followed by the two Scharfensteins, on private business, frustrated this surprise.

But, as a compensation, at the same time that the surprise failed, the ambuscade succeeded, and cruelly for the poor besieged, from whom this success of the enemy took away the last hope. Three times did Dandelot, returning to the charge, try to break through the wall of fire which separated him from the city; three times was he repulsed, without the besieged, in the night, and ignorant of the dispositions made by the Duke of Savoy, daring to leave the city and bring him succour.

At last, decimated by the balls, the three or four thousand men led by Dandelot dispersed through the plain, and with only five or six hundred he rejoined the constable on the next day, the 8th of August, to whom he related his check, and who, after listening to him, snarling all the while, swore that, since the Spaniards forced him to it, he would teach them one of the tricks of an old soldier.

From that moment the constable decided, then, to carry,

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in person, and with his whole army, — which, for that matter, was not a fifth of the Spanish army, — succours to Saint-Quentin, both of men and provisions.

A terrible blow to the besieged the next morning was this double news, — that of the surprise from which they had escaped, and that of the check suffered by the reinforcement which the brother of the admiral was bringing.

They were therefore reduced to their own resources, and we have seen what these resources were.

It was Maldent who, having received his discharge from the very lips of Dandelot, with many eulogies on his conduct, managed to make his way through the country safely, and came now, at three in the morning, along the old causeway of Vermand, to knock at the Ponthoille gate.

The last words of Dandelot — words pronounced to be transmitted to his brother — were not to despair, and that, if the admiral thought of any other method of revictualling the city, he could point it out to him by Maldent.

It was a promise, but a promise too vague for one to rest any hope whatever on it. Coligny therefore believed it better, when explaining, the next day, the very serious situation in which they were to the mayor and aldermen, not to say a single word of this promise.

The bourgeois, as Coligny says, in his Memoirs, "began by being a little astonished." But they were soon of one mind; and the admiral was able, seconded by them, to adopt new measures.

Many poor people of the neighbourhood, from fear of pillage, — an exercise in which the Spaniards had the reputation of excelling, — had, as we have said, taken refuge in the city, transporting thither their most precious possessions. Among the number of those who thus sought the hospitality of Saint-Quentin were two lords of noble house, and accustomed to war, — the sires of Caulaincourt and Amerval.

Coligny summoned them, and requested each to plant his banner on the square of the Town Hall, and to enroll all

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who would present themselves, promising to each recruit a crown, and a quarter in advance.

The two gentlemen accepted; they planted each his banner, and at the end of four or five hours they had enrolled two hundred and twenty men, who, Coligny himself confesses, were "well enough armed, and well trained for the place."

The admiral reviewed them the same evening, and ordered the gratuity as well as the quarter in advance to be handed to them.

Then, as he thought the time was come for having recourse to measures of rigour, and as the scanty supply of provisions in the city compelled him to remove from it all useless mouths, he published, by sound of trumpet, that all men and women who were strangers in Saint-Quentin, and all who had taken refuge there from the surrounding villages, would have to enroll themselves for work at the repairing of the fortifications, under penalty of being whipped at the crossways the first time they were found in fault, and hanged the second. "If they liked it better," added the proclamation, "they might assemble an hour before nightfall at the Ham gate, which would be opened, in order to let them withdraw."

Unfortunately for these poor people, the greater part of whom preferred withdrawal to labour, drums were heard beating and trumpets sounding during the day, and a new army, clad in blue, was perceived advancing from the direction of Cambray.

It was the English army, twelve thousand strong, which was coming to join that of the Duke of Savoy, and to occupy the ground prepared for it; two hours after, it completed the blockade of the city, masking its fourth side, and extending from the Faubourg d'Isle to Florimont.

The three generals commanding it were Pembroke, Clinson, and Grey.

It dragged in its train twenty-five pieces of cannon, and thus possessed an artillery double that which the admiral

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had been forced to scatter over the whole circumference of the ramparts of the city.

From the top of the walls the inhabitants saw with consternation this third army which had come to join the two others; but the admiral passed through the crowd, saying:—

"Come now, brave people of Saint-Quentin, courage! You cannot believe that I have come amongst you and have led with me so many good men for the pleasure of destroying myself and destroying them as well? Now, though we had to depend on ourselves alone, your constancy helping, I hold, on the faith of Coligny, the garrison sufficient to defend us against our enemies."

And behind him heads were proudly raised, eyes shone, and the most downcast said to one another:—

"Courage, then! Nothing can happen worse to us than to M. l'Amiral, and, since M. l'Amiral answers for everything, let us rely on his word."

But it was not so with the poor peasants in the city, who, not wishing to run the risk of working under the fire of the enemy, had prepared to leave: the arrival of the English army had closed the gates on them; and, between two perils, many decided to confront that which the labour of repairing the walls entailed.

The others persisted in their desire to quit the city, and were put outside of the Ham gate. They were more than seven hundred.

During twenty-four hours these unfortunates remained lying in the ditches, not daring to venture through the English or Spanish army; but hunger forced them to it, and, on the evening of the second day they advanced, two by two, with head bent and hands clasped, towards the lines of the enemy.

It was a terrible spectacle for those in the city to see these unfortunates, surrounded like a flock of sheep by the English or Spanish soldiers, driven into the camp by blows of pike-handles, and vainly beseeching mercy.

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Everybody around the admiral was weeping.

"But," says the latter, "it was a relief so far, for I should have either to support them or let them die of hunger."

During the evening Coligny took counsel with the good people of Saint-Quentin. The question, now that the city was completely blockaded, was to find a passage by which the constable could make a new attempt to aid them. The passage of the Somme through the marshes of Grosnard was settled on.

These marshes were very dangerous, on account of their swamps and morasses; but hunters accustomed to these marshes, which were judged impracticable, declared that, if they were given fifty men loaded with fascines, they would attempt, that very night, to construct a passage a dozen feet in width, forming a causeway in the middle of the marshes, and reaching to the Somme. As to the left bank, there was no difficulty: it was practicable.

The admiral added Maldent to the workmen; he gave him a letter for his uncle. In this letter he drew for the constable a plan of the localities, pointing out, so that he might not make any mistake, the point where the landing should take place; only he recommended him to have a supply of flat-bottomed boats, as he himself possessed but four cots in a condition to be of any use, and the biggest of these four would scarcely hold four men.

If the causeway was made during the night, Maldent was to swim across the Somme and make his way to the constable. If an answer was urgent, he was to bring it back in the same fashion.

At two in the morning hunters and workmen returned, saying that a road was traced, on which six men could confidently walk abreast.

The work had been done without any difficulty, the engineers who had sounded these marshes for the Duke of Savoy having reported to him that it would be madness for any body of troops whatever to venture there.

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Maldent had swam across the river, and made directly for La Fère through the plains.

Everything was going on, on this side, as well as possible, then; it was a weak hope, it is true, but they could only hope it would grow stronger through faith in the Lord.

At daybreak the admiral was on the platform of the Collegiate. It was the morning of the 9th. From that elevated point he commanded the triple camp of the enemy, and saw all the works of the besiegers.

It was twenty-four hours since Coligny had mounted to his observatory, and since then the Spaniards had made terrible progress; the great heaps of fresh earth rising on the Rémicourt side told that their pioneers were at work.

The admiral sent at once for an excellent English miner, named Lauxfort, and asked him what he thought of the works executed by the enemy. The latter was of opinion that these works denoted the beginning of a mine; but he reassured the admiral when he told him that, by good luck, he himself had already, two or three days ago, begun to countermine so opportunely that he could promise to give a good account of this work which so disturbed the admiral.

But at the very time they were constructing these mines, the Spaniards were busy with another work quite as disturbing: they were digging their trenches, and these trenches were approaching the city, — slowly, it is true, but without there being any chance of opposing their progress.

These trenches were three in number; all three menaced the Rémicourt rampart, towards which they were advancing in zigzag fashion, — one in front of the Tour à l'Eau, the second in front of the Porte de Rémicourt, the third in front of the Tour Rouge.

The admiral could make no efficacious opposition to these trenches; he had not men enough to make sorties and destroy them, nor arquebusiers to support these sorties and

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protect the retreat; but, as we have seen, he had, with the new recruits, scarcely six or seven hundred men, and, when all arms were collected, there were only forty arquebuses; so that, as he says himself, he had not "any means of obstructing these works, for which he was very sorry!"

All, then, the admiral could do was to repair, well or ill, as far as he could manage, according as the Spaniards destroyed.

But soon these repairs themselves became impossible. On the 9th a new battery was heard thundering; and this battery, raised on the platform of the abbey of Saint-Quentin-en-Isle, and taking the rampart of Rémicourt obliquely from the Tour à l'Eau to the Tour Rouge, hardly permitted any more repairs, for no workman dared to venture in that direction. However, as these repairs became the more urgent in proportion as the ravages of the enemy's artillery became more considerable, the admiral began to employ the stick; but, seeing that this means, so efficacious in other circumstances, was insufficient in the present one, a list of pioneers was drawn up, to whom a promise of excellent food and a crown a day was made. This "double dainty," as the admiral says, persuaded a hundred workmen to enroll themselves.

Maldent, on his side, arrived safe and sound at La Fère; and as soon as the constable knew of his nephew's distressful condition, and the works executed across the marshes, which would enable him to succour him, he resolved to visit himself the places without delay.

Consequently, an hour after the arrival of Maldent at La Fère, he set out at the head of two thousand cavalry and four thousand infantry, and marched to Essigny-le-Grand, where he stopped.

There, after forming his army in battle array, he sent three officers forward to study the position of the Spaniards, and the distance which separated their advance posts from the city and river; then he himself, with his most experienced captains, advanced behind them, as near

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as possible to the marshes of the Somme; that is to say, to the village of Gruoïs.

The three Spanish officers sent to reconnoitre were able to reach the Abbiette by turning a post of Spanish arquebusiers; then, having examined the marshes of Gauchy and sounded the approaches to the Somme, they returned to the constable, confirming all that Maldent had said.

At the same moment the latter received a letter from the constable, informing Coligny that his whole occupation now ought to be to try to hold out for a day or two, and that the succours asked for might reach him at any moment.

The admiral was recommended to keep a good watch, so that when these succours did arrive, they might not be kept waiting outside the walls.

In consequence of this, and as, in any case, the reinforcement must arrive from the direction of Tourival, the admiral doubled the posts on this side, and had a good number of ladders carried under the sheds of the powder magazine, in order that those arriving might enter at the same time by the Sainte-Catherine postern and mount up to the walls.

The constable joined his army at Essigny-le-Grand almost at the same moment that Maldent re-entered the city.

The resolution of the constable was to succour Saint-Quentin openly, and in full daylight. Darkness and artifice had so badly seconded the enterprise the first time that he appealed to those two great auxiliaries of courage, — the light of the sun and open force.

The constable then returned to La Fère, gathered together his infantry, cavalry, artillery, consisting of fifteen pieces of cannon, and ordered Maréchal de Saint-André, who was at Ham, to come and join him on the 10th of August, at an early hour, on the road from La Fère to Saint-Quentin.

After delivering his message to Coligny, Maldent returned straight to the tent of the adventurers. He found

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each at his post; every countenance was wreathed with smiles. Yvonnet's affairs were succeeding marvellously. Fracasso had abandoned the infinitive of the verb *perdre* for its past participle *perdu*, and had found a rhyme for it immediately, *pendu*. The two Scharfensteins had created a little business for themselves, which was doing remarkably well: they made nocturnal sorties, and lay in ambush on the passages communicating with the two camps; then, with a great flail of their own invention, reaching a distance of twelve feet, they waited for the passers-by, who received on the nape of the neck a blow dealt either by Franz or Heinrich, and fell down, it is easily understood, without uttering a syllable. Now, as the Spaniards and Flemings had just received their back pay, as well as the gratuity given on beginning a campaign, the two giants dragged towards them the dead or senseless man, and despoiled him. If he was dead, well, he did not awaken; if he was only unconscious, he awoke, trussed like a sausage, with a gag in his mouth, having beside him three or four companions trussed and gagged like himself. Then, when it was time to go to bed, the two Scharfensteins hoisted their three or four prisoners on their shoulders; and, poor as the ransoms might be, our Germans, who were men of order, poured all into the common treasury of the society. Procope continued to exercise his functions as notary and attorney *in partibus;* he could not attend to all the wills he was asked to draw up; so he doubled his price, and now made none under six livres. Lactance was gradually passing the contents of the cellar of the Jacobins, reputed the best in the neighbourhood, under the tent of the adventurers. Pilletrousse was constantly returning with purses which he claimed to have picked up when out riding, and with cloaks which he asserted he had found on certain posts in the city. Money affairs, as well as love affairs, were doing finely; gold was flowing in from all quarters, and, although in little streams, it promised at last to make so mighty a river that, should the war only last a year or

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two longer, each of our adventurers could retire with an honest fortune, and follow in peace and amid universal respect his natural *penchant*, whether that led him to love or poetry.

A smile was on every lip, except, however, let it be said, on that of poor Malemort.

Malemort was groaning lamentably; never were such groans heard. It was not that anything was the matter with him, but the contrary; for Malemort, according to the precept of Socrates, Γνῶθι σεαυτόν (know thyself), had made a study, not psychological, but anatomical, of himself. He knew himself thoroughly; he felt a decisive affair was coming on; and though his flesh knit so quickly, he saw clearly it would be quite impossible for him to play his part in it, and thus manage to appropriate a new gash or wound of some sort.

Maldent, on announcing confidentially the near arrival of the constable, put the climax to the despair of his companion.

It was the supper hour; the adventurers sat down to table. Thanks to the thousand resources of their imagination, this table was certainly better furnished than that of the admiral. The wine particularly, supplied, as we have said, by Brother Lactance, was at once abundant and delicious. Everybody, therefore, drank to every other body's health, and there were many other toasts besides.

They drank first in honour of the return of Maldent, in honour of the sonnet of Fracasso, which had turned out a success, then to the health of Malemort, to the health of the king, to the health of the admiral, to the health of Mademoiselle Gudule; then, in fine, and let us say that this was an after-thought of Maldent, to the health of poor Catherine Gosseu.

The only ones who had not so far proposed a health were the two Scharfensteins, who had not much readiness in elocution, although they had drunk much more than all the seven others together.

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But, at last, Heinrich arose, a full glass in his hand, his mouth smiling under his thick moustache, and his eyes twinkling under his wide eyebrows.

"Companions," said he, "I propose a health."

"Silence, gentlemen!" cried the adventurers; "Heinrich proposes a health!"

"And I, too," said Franz.

"And Franz, too!" cried the adventurers.

"Yes!"

"What health is it, Franz? Speak first; it is your right, for you are the youngest."

"The health which my uncle will propose."

"Ah, bravo!" cried the adventurers; "a respectful nephew, as always. Well, Heinrich, the health!"

"I propose," said Heinrich, "the health of that virtuous young man who offered us five hundred crowns for that little affair you know of —"

And he went through a somewhat vulgar pantomime, imitating a man killing a hare.

"Ah! yes," said Yvonnet, "the bastard of Waldeck. Good! we have not seen him since; he did not leave us an earnest, nor did he say on what day we were to belong to him."

"No matter," said Heinrich; "he has pledged his word, and a German has only his word. He is sure to come; he will give us an earnest and appoint a day."

"Thank you for answering for me, Heinrich!" said a voice at the door of the tent.

The adventurers turned round.

"Gentlemen," said the bastard of Waldeck, advancing, "here are the hundred crowns of gold which I promised you as earnest; and you belong to me body and soul during the whole of to-morrow, or rather to-day, for it is one o'clock in the morning."

Then he threw a hundred crowns of gold on the table, and, taking the glass which, to his great regret, Malemort had left full, —

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"Now, gentlemen," said he, "let us do honour to the toast of the brave Heinrich. Let us drink to the success of *the little affair!*"

And the adventurers drank joyously to the success of the little affair, which was nothing less than the murder of Emmanuel Philibert.

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II.

THE BATTLE OF SAINT-LAURENT.

Let us return to the constable.

The same day, — for, as the bastard of Waldeck had judiciously observed, the first hour of the day of the 10th of August, 1557, had just struck at the moment he was proposing his toast, — the same day, towards seven in the morning, the troops of Maréchal de Saint-André, coming from Ham under the conduct of Comte de la Rochefoucauld, made their junction with those of the constable.

The two armies, or rather the two fractions of an army thus united, formed an effective force of nine hundred gendarmes, a thousand light horse and arquebusiers on horseback, fifteen French companies, and twenty-two German companies of infantry; total, nine or ten thousand men.[1]

It was at the head of this small force that the constable was about to attack an army which numbered, since its junction with the English division, nearly sixty thousand men!

Therefore, in the council held in the evening, when he declared his intention of marching with an army of ten thousand men to the aid of a city besieged by sixty thousand, Maréchal de Saint-André pointed out to him the danger of such an enterprise, and what he had to fear from an enemy so active as the Duke of Savoy during a retreat of six leagues through plains which offered no shelter.

But, with his ordinary politeness, the admiral replied:

"*Corbleu!* monsieur, you may leave to me the part of doing what is proper for the good of the state. I learned

[1] Eleven thousand, according to Rabutin; eight thousand, according to Mergey, who was present at the battle, and taken prisoner there.

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long ago when and how to give or avoid battle; don't disturb yourself, therefore, about the issue."

The constable had set out during the night. He expected to be at the mill of Gauchy at four in the morning; he did not arrive until ten, his march having been delayed by the baggage and cannon.

The Duke of Savoy was, on his side, so badly served by his spies that he was surprised by the French army, which appeared suddenly on the heights of Gauchy.

The constable had time even to make prisoners of two companies numbering six hundred men, and occupying the advanced posts.

Arrived there, the French army found itself face to face with the Spanish army; but the Somme and the marsh of Abbiette extended between the two armies, which had no means of coming together except a causeway situated at the bottom of the Spanish camp, and over which four men at most could pass abreast.

After all we have said in connection with the siege, two words will suffice to make known the position of the constable, and render palpable the faults he committed on that fatal day.

All the Spanish, Flemish, and English army occupied the right bank of the Somme.

The fourteen companies of Julian Romeron and Carondelet, besides the two companies surprised by the constable, occupied, respectively, the Faubourg d'Isle and the mill of Gauchy, faubourg and mill being on the left bank of the Somme.

Now, once Montmorency had arrived at the mill of Gauchy, once the two companies were captured, there remained a very simple manœuvre to be executed; it was to blockade in the faubourg the fourteen companies of the two Spanish captains, to plant a battery of six pieces in front of the causeway, the only passage practicable for the enemy, to send quietly as many men as was necessary to Saint-Quentin, and then to retire when the city was re-

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victualled, sacrificing two of the six pieces of cannon, and a hundred men, who would have to continue firing on the causeway, and who would be sufficient to guard the passage.

The constable captured the two companies, blockaded the fourteen companies in the faubourg, and neglected entirely the causeway; he ordered the fourteen boats he had brought with him to be launched on the Somme, in accordance with the notification from the besieged that they possessed only three or four little cots.

But then it was seen that, instead of being placed at the head of the column, the carts drawing the boats had been placed at the tail.

Two hours were lost in bringing them up; an hour lost in pushing them to the border of the Somme; then, when the boats were launched, the soldiers threw themselves into them with so much eagerness that, being overloaded, they grounded on the sands of the pond of the Abbiette.

During this time, one of the archers, taken prisoner in the morning, at the mill of Gauchy, pointed out to the constable the tent of the Duke of Savoy.

The constable at once erected a battery aimed at that tent.

At the end of ten minutes the battery fired; and it could be seen by the movement around the tent that the bullets had not been lost. However, the boats, which had at last been successfully placed on the water, began to sail up the Somme. Certain resinous materials were burned on them, making a great smoke; this was the signal agreed on between the constable and Coligny.

At the first shout which denoted the appearance of the constable, Coligny had run up to the curtain of Tourival, from which he commanded all the country as far as the mill of Gauchy. He therefore saw in the distance the boats which were advancing, loaded with men; he immediately ordered a sortie by the postern of Sainte-Catherine, — a sortie intended to support the landing, — while he had ladders let down and placed against the walls, in order to

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give every facility to the men, however numerous they might be, for entering the city.

He had just made these dispositions, following with his eyes the smoke of the boats, which were drawing more and more near, when Procope approached him, and, appealing to the contract made between the admiral and the adventurers, requested leave for the day, as it was the intention of the adventurers to engage in a private enterprise.

It was the very letter of the treaty. The admiral had, therefore, no reason, but, furthermore, no right to oppose this fancy. Perfect freedom of action was, then, given to Procope and his companions.

So they followed the men ordered for the sortie, and were soon outside the city.

The bastard of Waldeck, armed from top to toe, and with the visor of his helmet lowered, was at their head.

The horse of Yvonnet, the two horses of Maldent, and a fourth horse, furnished by the bastard of Waldeck, formed the cavalry. This cavalry was composed of Yvonnet, Maldent, Procope, and Lactance.

Pilletrousse, Fracasso, and the two Scharfensteins formed the infantry.

However, it was intended that Pilletrousse and Fracasso should ride behind Yvonnet and Lactance, if the road was too long for their comfort. There was no cause for anxiety with regard to the two Scharfensteins, who were never fatigued, and could easily keep up with a horse galloping.

Poor Malemort alone was, as we see, absent from the expedition; but he was unfit to proceed either on foot or horseback, and was left behind to guard the tent.

The adventurers made for the bridge, where the boats were to land.

These boats soon, indeed, touched the shore, but the same hurry and disorder that marked their departure marked their arrival. Without paying any attention to the words or signals of those whom the admiral had sent to supervise the disembarkation, and point out the road to

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follow on the improvised causeway through the marshes, the soldiers jumped out, sinking in the mud up to the waist; then, being excited by this accident, amidst a frightful tumult which prevented any advice from being heard, they pushed one another, some to the right, others to the left, one party wandering into the morasses, the other in the direction of the enemy's camp.

Dandelot alone, with four hundred of his men, followed pretty closely the line traced by the fascines, and reached firm ground.

From the top of the rampart Coligny saw with dismay the reinforcement that had been so long expected diminished, and likely to be lost entirely, shouting vainly to those men who were struggling by hundreds in the morasses into which their obstinacy had hurled them, and where they gradually disappeared without any one being able to bring them aid.

However, Dandelot, after rallying some of his men, who had gone astray, or were in peril, arrived at the postern with five hundred soldiers and fifteen or sixteen captains, — to whom must be added a few gentlemen, "come there for their pleasure," as Coligny says.

These gentlemen were the Vicomte du Mont-Nôtre-Dame, the Sieur de la Curée, the Sieur Matas, and the Sieur de Saint-Rémy; a commissary of artillery and three cannoniers followed them.

After the sight of his brother, who arrived, all dripping from the waters of the Somme, Coligny confesses that the sight of these three cannoniers was the one which gave him the most pleasure, his only gunners being bourgeois gunners, who, despite their courage, were very far from being, owing to their lack of dexterity and experience, equal to the needs of a besieged city, and especially of a city besieged in such a formidable fashion.

The bastard of Waldeck waited quietly with the adventurers until the soldiers were disembarked, floundering, or lost in the morasses; then he took one of their boats, and,

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followed by his eight men, he descended the river and rowed to a little grove of elms extending, like a curtain of silver, to one of the ends of the pond of the Abbiette.

Arrived there, he gave to each a Spanish scarf, and asked nothing of them except to keep quietly under cover, and be ready to obey the first order they received from him.

His plan was easy to understand. He had learned, the evening before, of the intention of the constable to lead his army in person, and revictual Saint-Quentin. Knowing the Duke of Savoy as he did, he judged correctly that at the sight of the French army, Emmanuel Philibert would not remain behind his lines, but, on the contrary, would spring forth and give battle on the left bank of the Somme. This was why he was lying in ambush in the marshes of the Abbiette, in the neighbourhood of which, in his opinion, the battle must be fought; and he had distributed red and yellow scarfs among the adventurers, — at this period there were no regular uniforms, — in order that they might be taken for Spanish scouts, and so be able to approach and surround Emmanuel Philibert without exciting any suspicion.

Emmanuel Philibert once surrounded, we know what the bastard of Waldeck intended to do with him. We are about to see whether he was deceived in his anticipations.

Emmanuel Philibert had just left table when the presence of the French army on the other side of the Somme was announced to him; his tent was pitched on an eminence, so that he had only to go out and turn towards La Fère, to see the whole French army in battle array on the heights of the Abbiette. Then, lowering his eyes, he saw beneath him, but beyond reach of an arquebuse, the landing of Dandelot and his men; at the same time, one of those hissing sounds which never deceive a soldier made itself heard above his head, followed by two or three similar ones, and a ball entered the earth at his feet, covering him with sand and pebbles.

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Emmanuel Philibert took a step forward, in order to reach a point from which he could inspect the whole course of the Somme; but at the moment that he was marching, so to speak, to face the fire, he felt the grasp of a vigorous hand on his arm, and was pulled back.

It was the hand of Scianca-Ferro.

At that moment a ball passed clear through the tent, from end to end.

To remain longer at this point, become visibly the target of the constable's artillery, was to expose oneself to certain death. Emmanuel Philibert, while giving the order to bring him his arms and saddle his horse, gained a little chapel, mounted the platform of the belfry, and from there could see that the whole French army did not extend farther than Saint-Lazare, and that this village was unguarded save by an inconsiderable body of cavalry.

These observations made, he descended rapidly, armed himself under the porch even of the little chapel, summoned Counts Egmont and Horn, and sent a messenger to Duke Eric of Brunswick and Count Mansfeld, ordering them to reconnoitre the French, and see especially whether the causeway of Rouvroy was threatened by any battery, open or masked, and appointed a rendezvous at the quarters of Field-Marshal de Benincourt.

A quarter of an hour after, he was himself at the rendezvous. He had gone round half of the city, passing by Florimont and the road called to-day the Ruelle d'Enfer, — which abutted on the line of circumvallation, beginning at Saint-Pierre-au-Canal, and ending at the Faubourg Saint-Jean.

The scouts of the Duke of Brunswick and Count Mansfeld had already returned; the causeway of Rouvroy was perfectly free, and the extreme point of the French army did not reach La Neuville.

Emmanuel Philibert at once ordered two thousand men to mount their horses, put himself at their head, was the first to cross the causeway of Rouvroy, directed his two

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thousand horse to pass on behind him, and then formed them in battle array, in order that they might protect the infantry.

Then, according as his troops debouched, he made them file on Mesnil by Harly, hiding them, by means of this circuit, from the sight of the French army.

More than fifteen thousand men had already passed while the constable was amusing himself by firing on the empty tent of Emmanuel Philibert.

Suddenly the Duc de Nevers, sent by the constable with the companies of gendarmes and the Curton and Aubigné companies to explore the plain of La Neuville, discovered, on reaching an elevation, all the dispositions of the Spanish army.

An immense column of the enemy, protected by the two thousand horse of the Duke of Savoy, was advancing on the other side of Harly, and was gradually coming into view, — a dense and gloomy mass, behind the Mesnil-Saint-Laurent, already enclosing the army of the constable within a semicircle.

The Duc de Nevers, weak as was the troop he commanded, had for a moment the idea of sending word to the constable that he was going to sacrifice his life and that of all his men, in order to give the French army time to retreat; but the constable had forbidden him to come to an engagement, under penalty of his head: it would have been disobedience to orders, and he knew how rigorous the constable was in matters of military discipline. He did not dare to take on himself the responsibility of such an act; he fell back on a corps of light cavalry commanded by the Prince de Condé, which was stationed at the mill of Gratte-Panse, on the road of Le Mesnil, and, putting his horse to a gallop, went to inform the constable of what had happened.

The constable immediately summoned M. de Saint-André, Comte de la Rochefoucauld, the Duc d'Enghien, and his principal officers, and explained to them that,

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satisfied with having introduced into Saint-Quentin the succours demanded by his nephew, he judged it right to make as honourable, but as speedy a retreat as possible. He therefore called on each corps commander to take charge of his division, form his men, and retire in the same order in which he himself would, avoiding every engagement which was not forced on him.

But the constable, so zealous in recommending strategic precautions to others, did not himself adopt the simple one of placing a hundred arquebusiers in ambush in each of the windmills situated beside Urvilliers, Essigny-le-Grand, and what is to-day called La Manufacture, in order to break the front of the enemy and occupy it by their fire.

The French infantry took the head of the retreating army; it advanced at a quick step, but yet in good order, towards the woods of Jussy, which alone could offer it a cover against the charges of the cavalry.

But it was too late: when it was at a spot from which it would still require three quarters of an hour to reach the woods, the squadrons and battalions of the Spanish army appeared within five hundred paces of the French army, forming a vast circle around it.

The two hostile forces confronted each other.

The constable halted, placed his cannons in battery, and waited. The numerical superiority of the enemy's cavalry left no hope of reaching the wood.

Thereupon Emmanuel Philibert divided his army into three great corps, gave Count Egmont the command of the right wing, Dukes Ernest and Eric of Brunswick that of the left, explained his plan, and offered his hand to them, received their promise not to undertake anything without his orders, and took the command of the centre.

Between the French and Spanish armies there was a mass of sutlers, servants without masters, *goujats*, as they were then called, — all that wretched multitude, in fact, which fastened like vermin on the armies of the period.

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Emmanuel Philibert ordered some cannon-shot to be fired upon this rabble.

The effect was what he expected: terror seized them; a thousand men and women rushed, shrieking, into the ranks of the soldiers of the constable.

An effort was made to drive them back; but terror is sometimes more powerful than courage.

Rising on his spurs, Emmanuel Philibert saw the confusion this eruption caused in the French ranks.

Then, turning to Scianca-Ferro, he said, —

"Let Count Egmont fall on the French rear-guard with all his Flemish cavalry. It is time!"

Scianca was off like a flash of lightning.

Then, to Duke Ernest, who was near him, —

"Duke," said Emmanuel, "while Egmont charges the rear-guard with his Flemish cavalry, do you and your brother take each two thousand arquebusiers on horseback, and attack the head of the column. The centre is my affair."

Duke Ernest set out at a gallop.

Emmanuel Philibert followed his two messengers with his eyes; and, seeing each arrive at his destination, seeing that the movement ordered by him had begun, he drew his sword, raised it above his head, and said, —

"Sound, trumpets; it is the hour!"

The Duc de Nevers, who commanded the extreme left of the French army, was ordered to resist the attack of Count Egmont. Taken in the flank by the Flemish cavalry at the moment he was crossing the valley of Grugies, he turned round and faced the enemy with his companies of gendarmes; but two catastrophes interfered with his defence: a flood of those sutlers which had rolled along the whole centre of the army, driven back from rank to rank, appeared on the top of the hills, and descended like an avalanche, rushing between the legs of the horses, while, at the same time, a company of English light horse in the pay of France turned rein, joined the Flemish cavalry,

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with which it returned immediately to charge the gendarmes of the Duc de Nevers, and that in so furious a fashion that it pursued the bulk of our cavalry into the valley of the Oise, where it had retreated.

While this was going on, despite the efforts of the Duc de Nevers, who did wonders on that day, the left wing was beginning to be thrown into disorder; for Dukes Eric and Ernest of Brunswick, in pursuance of the order given to one and transmitted to the other, attacked the head of the French column the moment it left Essigny-le-Grand, and appeared on the causeway of Gibercourt.

But, as it had not had to deal with the eruption of the sutlers and the treason of the English light horse, it held its ground, continued its march, repulsing the arquebusiers on horseback, and gave time to the constable and the bulk of the army — which had extended its lines in its passage across Essigny-le-Grand — to concentrate in the midst of the vast plain extending between Essigny-le-Grand, Montescourt-Lizeroles, and Gibercourt.

There, feeling he could go no farther, the constable stopped a second time, like the boar brought to bay, who decides to make head against the dogs; and, all the time saying his *Pater-Nosters*, he formed his army in a square, and placed his cannon in battery.

It was his second halt; he was entirely surrounded; it was necessary to conquer or die.

The old soldier did not fear to die; he hoped to conquer.

And, indeed, the old French infantry, on which the constable reckoned, showed itself worthy of its reputation, sustaining the shock of the entire hostile army; while, at the mere advance of the latter, the Germans in our pay threw down their pikes, and raised their hands to beg for quarter.

The Duc d'Enghien, on his side, young, and full of ardour, ran to the assistance of the Duc de Nevers with his light cavalry; he found him unhorsed for the second time, but getting into the saddle, in spite of a pistol-shot

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which had gone through his thigh. It was the first pistol-shot he received; before the end of the day he was to have a second.

However, the constable held firm. As his infantry was repulsing the charges of the Flemish cavalry with incredible intrepidity, Emmanuel Philibert brought up cannon to demolish these living ramparts.

Ten pieces thundered at once, and began to make a breach in the army.

Then the Duke of Savoy placed himself at the head of a squadron of cavalry, and charged like a simple captain.

The shock was profound and decisive; the constable, surrounded on all sides, defended himself with the courage of despair, saying, according to his habit, his *Pater*, and giving, with each phrase of this *Pater*, a thrust that overturned a man.

Emmanuel Philibert saw him from afar, recognised him, and galloped up, shouting —

"Take him alive! it is the constable!"

It was time; Montmorency had just received a wound from a pike-thrust under the left arm, through which his blood and strength were escaping. The Baron of Batenburg and Scianca-Ferro, who had heard the cry of Emmanuel, rushed forward, made a rampart of their bodies for the constable, and drew him out of the *mêlée*, calling on him to surrender, as resistance was useless.

But the constable, as a sign that he surrendered, gave up only his poniard; to the Duke of Savoy alone, he said, would he surrender his sword.

It was because this *fleur-de-lis* sword was the sword of the Constable of France.

Emmanuel Philibert advanced quickly, and, making himself known, received the sword from the hand of Montmorency himself.

The battle was won by the Duke of Savoy, but it was not over; fighting continued until nightfall. Many refused to surrender, and were killed.

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Of this number were Jean de Bourbon, Duc d'Enghien, — who, after having had two horses killed under him, was shot through the body while trying to deliver the constable, — François de la Tour, Vicomte de Turenne, and eight hundred gentlemen who lay on the field of battle.

The principal prisoners beside the constable were the Ducs de Montpensier and Longueville, Maréchal de Saint-André, the Rheingrave, Baron de Curton, Comte de Villiers, bastard of Savoy, the Duke of Mantua's brother, the Seigneur de Montbron, son of the constable, Comte de la Rochefoucauld, the Duc de Bouillon, Comte de la Roche-Guyon, and the Seigneurs of Lansac, Estrées, Roche du Maine, Chaudenier, Poudormy, Vassé, Aubigné, Rochefort, Brian, and La Chapelle.

The Duc de Nevers, the Prince de Condé, the Comte de Sancerre, and the eldest son of the constable retreated to La Fère.

The Sieur de Bordillon joined them there, bringing with him the only two pieces of cannon which had escaped the great defeat, in which France, out of an army of eleven thousand men, had six thousand killed, three thousand taken prisoners, and lost three hundred war chariots, sixty flags, fifty standards, and all the baggage, tents, and provisions.

There were not ten thousand men left to close the road to the capital against the enemy.

Emmanuel Philibert ordered his troops to withdraw to their camp.

Night came; and Emmanuel Philibert, meditating not, without doubt, on what he had done, but on what he had yet to do, accompanied by only a few officers, was following the causeway leading from Essigny to Saint-Lazare, when eight or ten men, half on foot and half on horseback, issued from the mill of Gauchy, and slipped gradually between the gentlemen of his escort.

For some time the whole party proceeded in silence; but suddenly, when they were passing close to a little

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wood whose projecting shadow increased the darkness, the horse of the Duke of Savoy gave utterance to a doleful neigh, started aside, and fell down.

Thereupon was heard a noise like the clash of steel against steel; then in the shadow there was a cry, the more terrible that it was pronounced in a low voice, —

"Down with Duke Emmanuel!"

But scarcely were these words uttered, scarcely was there time to guess whether the fall of the horse was natural or not, or whether its rider ran any real danger, when a man, overturning all before him, striking friends and foes with his battle-mace, hurried into the middle of this sombre and almost invisible tragedy, crying, —

"Hold your ground, brother Emmanuel; I am here!"

Emmanuel did not need the encouragement of Scianca-Ferro; he was holding his ground indeed, for, prostrate though he was, he had seized one of his assailants, and, holding him on top of himself, made a sort of buckler of him.

The horse, on the other hand, although it had one of the hind legs cut, as if it felt the necessity of defending its master, kicked out vigorously with the three legs remaining, and with one of those kicks overturned one of the unknown spectres that had suddenly started up around the conqueror of the day.

During all the time Scianca-Ferro, while striking right and left, was crying, —

"Help the duke, gentlemen! help the duke!"

It was useless. All the gentlemen of the escort had drawn their swords, and every one plunged, striking at random, into the *mêlée*, where but one cry was heard, "Kill! kill!" and where none knew who was killed, or who killed.

At last the gallop of a score of horsemen was heard, and, by the reflection of the flame on the trees, it was seen that they carried torches.

At this sight and sound, two men on horseback hurried

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out of the conflict, and fled across the fields, without any one dreaming of pursuing them.

Two men on foot threw themselves into the wood, and no one tried to follow them either.

All resistance was over.

At the end of some seconds, twenty torches threw their glare over the field of battle.

Scianca-Ferro's first care was to see to the duke.

Emmanuel, if he was wounded, had only received a few slight wounds; the man he had held between his arms received most of the blows intended for him, and was truly his shield.

This man seemed completely unconscious, — a circumstance which was due to the fact that Scianca-Ferro had dealt him a blow with his mace on the back of the head.

As to the three other men stretched on the ground, and who seemed dead or very ill, nobody knew them.

The one seized by the duke bore a helmet with a visor, and this visor was lowered.

The ear pieces were unlaced and the helmet taken off, and the pale countenance of a young man of from twenty-four to twenty-five was exposed to view.

His red hair and red beard were covered with the blood which flowed at once from his mouth and nose, as well as from a contusion he had received at the back of the head.

In spite of his paleness, in spite of the blood which covered him, Emmanuel Philibert and Scianca-Ferro recognised, doubtless both at the same time, the wounded man, for they exchanged a rapid glance.

"Ah!" murmured Scianca-Ferro, "it is you, then, serpent!"

Then, turning to the duke, —

"You see, Emmanuel," said he, "he is only unconscious. What if I finish him?"

But Emmanuel raised his hand in sign of command and silence; and, dragging the young man himself from the hands of Scianca-Ferro, he drew him to the other side of

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the ditch bordering the road, planted him against a tree, and placed his helmet near him.

Then, mounting his horse, he said, —

"Gentlemen, it is for God alone to judge what has taken place between me and that man, and you see that God is on my side!"

But, seeing that Scianca-Ferro was grumbling and looking at the wounded man with an angry shake of his head, —

"Brother," he said, "I entreat you. The father was enough."

Then to the others, —

"Gentlemen, I desire that the battle fought on this day, the 10th of August, and so glorious for the Spanish and Flemish armies, be called the battle of Saint-Laurent, in memory of the day on which it was given."

And they returned to the camp, discoursing on the battle, but without saying a single word of the skirmish that followed it.

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III.

HOW THE ADMIRAL HAD NEWS OF THE BATTLE.

God had just declared once more against France, or rather — if we sound the mysteries of Providence more deeply than do ordinary historians — God prepared by Pavia and Saint-Quentin the way for the work of Richelieu, just as, by Poitiers, Crécy, and Agincourt, he had prepared the way for the work of Louis XI.

Then perhaps he also wished to give an example of a great kingdom lost by the nobility and saved by the people.

However this may be, the blow was terrible, and made a cruel wound in the heart of France, at the same time that it delighted our great enemy, Philip II.

The battle was fought on the 10th; it was only on the 12th that the King of Spain was reassured enough against all that nobility sleeping on the plains of Gibercourt, to venture on a visit to Emmanuel Philibert in his camp.

The Duke of Savoy, who had given up to the English all that undulating ground lying between the Somme and the chapel of Épargnemaille, returned to pitch his tent in front of the rampart of Rémicourt, the point where he resolved to continue the works of the siege, if, contrary to all expectation, Saint-Quentin, on learning that the battle was lost, — and lost under such frightful conditions, — did not surrender.

This second encampment — placed on a little hillock between the river and the tents of Comte de Mègue — was the nearest to the ramparts, and was scarcely the two-thirds of the distance a cannon-shot would carry from the city.

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Philip II., after taking an escort of a thousand men at Cambray, and after informing Emmanuel Philibert of his coming, in order that the latter might double or treble the escort, if he judged it necessary, by troops sent from the camp, arrived before Saint-Quentin on the 12th at eleven o'clock in the morning.

Emmanuel Philibert awaited him at the borders of the camp. There he assisted the King of Spain in getting off his horse, and, according to the etiquette established between even a prince and a king, wished to kiss his hand.

"No, cousin," said Philip; "no, I ought rather to kiss yours, — to kiss the hand of one who has just won me a victory so great, so glorious, and which has cost us so little blood!"

In fact,— according to the chroniclers who have described this curious battle, — the Spaniards lost only sixty-five men, and the Flemings fifteen.

As for the English army, it did not require to take any part at all in the conflict, and looked quietly on from its encampment while our defeat was being accomplished.

As we have said, this defeat was frightful; the dead bodies covered all the plain between Essigny, Montescourt-Lizeroles, and Gibercourt.

It was a piteous spectacle, which a worthy Christian woman had not been able to see without emotion. Catherine de Laillier, mother of the Sieur Louis Varlet, Seigneur of Gibercourt and mayor of Saint-Quentin, had a field named the Vieux-Moustier blessed and consecrated, in which she caused immense ditches to be dug and all the bodies to be brought there and buried.

From that time the name of the Vieux-Moustier was changed to that of *Cimetière le Piteux*.[1]

While this worthy lady was accomplishing her pious task, Emmanuel Philibert was counting his prisoners; we have said how numerous they were.

[1] Charles Gomart, "Siège et Bataille de Saint-Quentin."

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Portrait of Philip II.

Photo-Etching. — From Painting by Titian in 1549.

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King Philip passed them in review; then the monarch and his suite retired to the tent of Emmanuel Philibert. The French standards taken during the battle were set up along the trenches, and cannon were fired in the Spanish and English camps in sign of rejoicing.

Philip II. looked on at these rejoicings from the threshold of the tent of the Duke of Savoy.

He summoned Emmanuel, who was talking with the constable and Comte de la Rochefoucauld.

"Cousin," said he, "you have, no doubt, some motive besides that of rejoicing in making all this noise?"

And as at this moment the royal standard of Spain was being planted over the tent in which was Philip II., —

"Yes, sire," answered Emmanuel, "I reckon on the enemy, seeing they have no further chance of relief, surrendering without forcing us to make an assault, and so allowing us to march on Paris and arrive there at the same time as the news of the defeat of Saint-Laurent; and as to this standard we are raising, it is to inform M. de Coligny and M. Dandelot, his brother, that your Majesty is in the camp, and to make him the more desirous of surrendering, knowing that he may hope more from your royal clemency than from any other person."

But as the Duke of Savoy finished these words, in response to all the joyous discharges of artillery which enveloped the city in a cloud of smoke, a single flash shone, a single detonation was heard from the ramparts, and a ball passed, hissing, three feet above the head of Philip II.

Philip turned fearfully pale.

"What is that?" he asked.

"Sire," said the constable, laughing, "it is a sort of flag of truce which my nephew sends you."

Philip did not question further; on the very instant he gave orders to have a tent erected for him somewhere beyond the reach of the French cannon; and on arriving at that tent, he made a vow, in thanksgiving for his

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escape, to build in honour of Saint-Laurent, as a testimony of the evident protection he had bestowed on the Spaniards on the 10th, the finest monastery that ever had been built.

This vow resulted in the construction of the Escurial, that gloomy and magnificent pile, altogether significant of the genius of its author, presenting in its entirety the form of a gridiron, the instrument of the martyrdom of Saint-Laurent; a gigantic mass of buildings, at which three hundred workmen laboured for twenty-two years, on which thirty-three millions of livres were expended, — a sum equivalent at present to a hundred millions, — through which the light penetrates by eleven thousand windows, and into which a person may enter by fourteen thousand doors, the keys of which weigh five hundred tons.[1]

While Philip was having his tent pitched outside the range of the cannon-balls, let us see what was passing in the city, which was not yet ready to surrender, at least, if Coligny's *flag of truce* was to be trusted.

The admiral had heard the cannon thundering all the day in the direction of Gibercourt, but he was ignorant of the issue of the battle. So, when he retired to rest, he gave orders that anybody coming from outside with news should be immediately introduced to him.

About one in the morning, he was awakened; three men had just presented themselves at the Sainte-Catherine postern, saying they could give details on the battle.

The admiral bade them enter immediately; they were Yvonnet and the two Scharfensteins.

The two Scharfensteins could not say much: we know that elocutionary fluency was not their principal merit; but this was not the case with Yvonnet.

The young adventurer told all he knew, — that is to say, that the battle was lost, and that a great number had been

[1] We know the reply of a Gascon gentleman to whom the monastery was shown in all its details, and who was asked what he thought of this monument. "I think," he said, "that his Majesty Philip II. must have been in a terrible fright to make such a vow!"

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killed and taken prisoners; he was ignorant of the names, but thought he heard the Spaniards say the constable was wounded and a prisoner. However, there would be more news from Procope and Maldent, who must have escaped.

The admiral asked Yvonnet why he and his companions, who formed part of the garrison, engaged in the battle; to which Yvonnet replied that he believed it was in accordance with a right reserved to them by Procope in the treaty they had made with the admiral.

Not only had the right been reserved, but the admiral was aware of the fact; it was, then, through pure interest in the adventurers that he asked the question. Moreover, there was no doubt as to the share they had taken in the action. Yvonnet carried his left arm in a scarf; it had been pierced by a dagger. Heinrich Scharfenstein had his face cut in two by a sabre-stroke; and Franz was limping, having received a kick from a horse that would have broken the leg of an elephant or a rhinoceros, and which produced on his a grave contusion.

The admiral recommended the three adventurers to keep the secret; he wished the city to learn as late as possible of the defeat of the constable.

Yvonnet and the two Scharfensteins returned to their tent, where they found Malemort a prey to a frightful nightmare; he was dreaming that there was a fight, that he saw the battle, and that, sunk up to his waist in a marsh, he could not manage to extricate himself so as to take part in it.

It was not quite a dream, as we know; so when his three companions awoke him, his groans, instead of diminishing, redoubled. He insisted on knowing all the details of the ambuscade which had turned out so badly, and at every detail which would have made another person desire to be a hundred leagues away from such a *mêlée*, he repeated sadly, —

"And I was not there!"

At five in the evening, Maldent also reappeared. He

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had remained unconscious on the field of battle; he was supposed to be dead; he revived after a time, and, thanks to his knowledge of the Picard *patois*, succeeded in escaping.

Brought before the admiral, he had nothing further to tell him more than had been told already by Yvonnet, except that he lay concealed a part of the day in the reeds of the pond of the Abbiette.

Pilletrousse arrived during the following night. Pilletrousse was one of those who had thrown themselves into the wood, and whom no one had the idea of pursuing.

Pilletrousse knew Spanish almost as well as Maldent knew Picard. Thanks to his red and yellow scarf and his pure Castilian, at daybreak Pilletrousse united with a Spanish band charged by Emmanuel Philibert to search among the dead for M. de Nevers, who had so often and so dangerously exposed himself that it could not be believed he survived the terrible day. Pilletrousse and the Spanish detachment spent the whole day on the field of battle, turning over the dead in the sad hope of finding the Duc de Nevers among them. It is needless to say that one who would turn over the dead would also search his pockets; so that Pilletrousse had not only accomplished a pious task, but did a good business; he returned without a contusion, and with his pockets full.

According to the orders given, he was led before the admiral, to whom he furnished the most circumstantial details on the dead and on the living, having all these details from his companions in the search for Nevers.

It was therefore through Pilletrousse that Coligny learned the death of the Duc d'Enghien and of Vicomte de Turenne, also of the capture of the constable, his son, Gabriel de Montmorency, Comte de la Rochefoucauld, and all those noble gentlemen we have named.

The admiral cautioned him to be more discreet even than the others, and dismissed him with the announcement that four of his companions had returned.

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The Jacobin fathers were notified about daybreak that two peasants of Gruoïs were bringing back one of their brothers dead. The corpse was nailed down in its coffin, over which was spread the shirt of steel — a substitute for a hair shirt — which the good man lately wore next his skin.

The Spaniards had stopped the bearers on their way five or six times; but each time the latter made them understand what a pious mission they were fulfilling in bringing back to the convent of the Jacobins the body of a poor monk, who had died in the exercise of his religious functions, and the Spaniards always made the sign of the cross and let them pass.

The orders of the admiral had been to bring him the living, and not the dead; the corpse was therefore transported directly to the convent of the Jacobins, where it was laid in the middle of the chapel.

And as the worthy brothers surrounded the bier, asking one another anxiously who could be its tenant, a voice was heard issuing from the coffin and saying, —

"It is I, my dear brethren, — I, your unworthy captain, Brother Lactance. Let me out quickly, for I 'm stifled."

They were not mistaken. Brother Lactance rose, went and knelt down before the altar, said his prayer of thanksgiving, and related that, after an unlucky expedition, he found an asylum with certain brave peasants; the latter, however, feared a visit from the Spaniards, and then God inspired him with the idea of getting himself nailed down in a coffin and brought to the city as if dead.

The stratagem was the easier because it was in the house of a carpenter he found a refuge.

We have seen that the stratagem was perfectly successful.

The good fathers, who were delighted to see their worthy captain back again, did not bargain about the price of the coffin or the pay of the bearers; they gave a crown for the bier and two crowns to the latter, who requested Brother Lactance to choose them, in preference to all others, should he take it into his head to get buried again.

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It was Brother Lactance who, not having received any warning from the admiral, told of the constable's defeat; the news spread through the convent, and from the convent reached the city.

Towards eleven in the morning, Maître Procope appeared before the admiral, who was standing on the rampart near the Tour à l'Eau.

Maître Procope had been the last to arrive; but this was not the fault of the worthy lawyer. He had done his best, and arrived with a letter from the constable.

How did Maître Procope come by this letter from the constable? We are going to explain.

Maître Procope had presented himself quite simply at the Spanish camp, as a poor devil of a reiter who was in the service of M. le Connétable, as furbisher of his arms.

He asked to be permitted to join his master; the request was so modest that it was at once granted.

Maître Procope was shown the lodgings assigned to the constable, and Maître Procope at once went thither.

A glance made the constable understand he had something to say to him.

The constable answered by another glance, and, by dint of growling, cursing, and swearing, at last succeeded in banishing all who were present.

Then when he was alone with Procope, —

"Come now, you rascal," he said, "I have seen you had something to tell me. Out with it speedily, and be quick and plain, or I 'll give you up to the Duke of Savoy as a spy, who 'll have you hanged, for sure."

Thereupon Procope had related a whole history to the constable, — a history very creditable, indeed, to the high character of Procope.

The admiral, who had every confidence in him, had despatched him to his uncle to gain tidings of the latter; and Procope, to reach M. le Connétable, had adopted the pretext we have mentioned.

The constable might then charge him (Procope) with

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a reply, written or verbal, for his nephew; he would find a way to get into the city, — that was his look-out.

The only reply M. de Montmorency could give his nephew was to hold out as long as possible.

"Give me that advice in writing," said Procope.

"But, brigand!" said the constable, "if you are taken with such a message on you, do you know what will happen to you?"

"I shall be hanged," answered Procope, quietly; "but do not be alarmed, I have no intention at present of letting myself be hanged."

Reflecting that, after all, it was Procope's affair whether he was hanged or not, and that he could find no better way of giving news to the admiral, the constable wrote a letter, which Procope took the precaution of hiding inside the lining of his doublet.

Then, while all the time polishing furiously the helmet, cuirass, armlets, and thigh-pieces of the constable's armour, which had never shone so brilliantly as since it came into the hands of Procope, the latter awaited a favourable opportunity for returning to the city.

On the morning of the 12th, the opportunity presented itself. Philip II. arrived in camp, as we have said already, and the excitement was so great on the occasion that no one thought of paying any attention to so insignificant a person as the furbisher of M. le Connétable.

The furbisher of M. le Connétable therefore succeeded in making his escape, seconded in his flight by the smoke of the cannon fired in sign of rejoicing, and he had come and knocked coolly at the Rémicourt gate, which was opened for him.

The admiral — we have said so before — was on the rampart, near the Tour à l'Eau, a point from which he commanded the entire Spanish camp.

He was drawn thither by the great noise and the great festival of which the camp was evidently the scene, he himself being ignorant of the cause of noise and festival.

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Procope explained the situation, handed him the constable's letter, and pointed out the tent of Emmanuel Philibert.

Then he added that this tent had been prepared for the reception of Philip II.; and the admiral could not doubt as to the truth of this assertion when he saw the royal Spanish standard waving above it.

Furthermore, Procope, whose eyes were as keen as an attorney's ought to be, declared that a man clad in black, standing on the threshold of the same tent, was King Philip II.

It was then that Coligny formed the idea of answering all this noise and smoke by firing a single cannon-shot. Procope asked leave to point the cannon. Coligny did not think he could well refuse so trivial a request to the man who brought him a letter from his uncle.

Procope aimed the cannon as best he could; and if the ball passed three feet above the head of Philip, it was certainly the fault of the adventurer's eyes, not of his will.

However this may be, the constable, as we have seen, recognised the answer of Coligny, who, convinced that Procope had done all he could, ordered ten crowns to be counted out to him for his trouble.

Procope joined his companions about one o'clock, or rather a part of his companions; namely, Yvonnet, the two Scharfensteins, Maldent, Pilletrousse, Lactance, and Malemort.

As to the poet Fracasso, vainly did they expect him; he did not reappear. Certain peasants, questioned by Procope, declared they had seen a dead body hanging from a tree, just at the spot where the skirmish on the evening of the 10th had occurred, and Procope came to the judicious conclusion that this body was that of Fracasso.

Poor Fracasso! his rhyme had brought him ill-luck.

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IV.

THE ASSAULT.

From the moment that the victory of Saint-Laurent and the presence of Philip II. before Saint-Quentin did not bring about the surrender of the city; from the moment when, instead of surrendering, Coligny, without respect for the royal Majesty, forced Philip II. to beat a retreat, by sending an impertinent cannon-ball to hiss in his royal ears, — it became evident the city was determined to hold out to the last extremity.

It was therefore resolved to press on the siege unremittingly.

It was now ten days since the siege had begun; it was a good deal of time already to waste before such wretched walls. It was necessary to make an end of the matter, once for all, and teach a lesson to those stubborn and impudent burghers who dared to still hold out when they had lost all hope of being succoured, and could only look forward to seeing their city carried by storm, and all the woes such an event ordinarily entails.

The precautions taken by Coligny to prevent the news of the defeat of the constable reaching the people of Saint-Quentin was useless: the news spread through the city; but, strange to say, and the admiral himself vouches for the fact, it had more influence on the soldiers than on the bourgeois.

However, the great difficulty of the admiral — a difficulty which, as we have seen, troubled him from the beginning — was to find workmen to repair the ravages made by the cannon. These ravages bore particularly hard on the

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rampart of Rémicourt; and since the arrival of the English army, which had sent a dozen pieces of artillery to Carondelet and Julian Romeron, the rampart was no longer tenable. In fact, two batteries had been established, — one, as we have said, on the platform of the abbey of Saint-Quentin-en-Isle, and the second on the heights of the faubourg. These two batteries ploughed the Rémicourt rampart along its whole length, from the Porte d'Isle to the Tour Rouge; so that the workmen, unprotected from head to foot, and exposed to the double fire of the English and Spanish batteries, no longer dared to approach the rampart, which threatened to fall to pieces one fine morning from end to end.

It was Dandelot who got rid of this danger.

He hit on the idea of having all the old boats on the Somme transported on the rampart, and made into traverses.

The work commenced one evening at nightfall.

Franz and Heinrich, covered each with a boat as with an immense hat, undertook this rough task. According as a boat was placed crosswise on the rampart, pioneers filled it with earth.

Five boats were disposed of in this fashion during one night; they were filled with earth and afforded a shelter to the workmen.

Then the soldiers appeared again on the boulevard, and the workmen resumed their task.

During this time, two new covered roads had been begun by the besiegers, the first in the direction of the Tour à l'Eau, the second close to the mill of the Rémicourt curtain.

The admiral had the streets unpaved, the paving stones carried to the towers, and those paving stones thrown into the trenches, in order to disturb the Spanish pioneers; but the gabions which masked the miners protected them, in great part, from the action of these projectiles, and allowed them to continue their work of destruction.

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Philip II., in order to excite the Spanish cannoniers to fix their batteries, came sometimes to visit them when at work; but, one day when he was looking on, the admiral recognised him, and calling his most skilful arquebusiers, pointed out the royal target at which they must fire. The very next moment, a hail of bullets whistled around the king, who, for fear of accidents, had brought his confessor with him, in order to have always within reach an absolution *in extremis*.

At the noise made by those bullets, Philip II. turned towards the monk.

"Father," he said, "what do you think of that music?"

"I think it 's anything but pleasant, sire," answered the monk, shaking his head.

"Such is also my opinion," said Philip. "I find it hard to understand how my father Charles V. could take so much pleasure in it. Let us go away."

And, in fact, the king and his confessor went away, never to return.

However, the completion of these works took nine days; they were nine days gained for the King of France, who doubtless was not wasting the time which the admiral and the brave people of his city of Saint-Quentin were gaining for him.

At last, on the 21st, the batteries were unmasked, and on the 22d they began to play. It was only then that the people of Saint-Quentin were able to judge of the danger which menaced them. During these nine days, Philip brought from Cambray all the artillery it could supply; so that the entire space between the Tour à l'Eau and the Tour Saint-Jean formed only one immense battery of fifty pieces of cannon, battering a line of walls of about a thousand metres.

On the other side, the Flemish batteries of the Ruelle d'Enfer had resumed their fire, battering the curtains of the Vieux-Marché and the Dameuse guard-house.

The English batteries were separated into two parts, one

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of which aided the Spanish batteries of Carondelet and Julian Romeron, while the other, under the orders of Lord Pembroke, sent their balls into the Faubourg de Ponthoille and against the Tour Sainte-Catherine, from the heights of Saint-Prix.

Saint-Quentin was completely enveloped in a circle of fire.

Unfortunately, the old walls fronting Rémicourt, the point attacked with most fury, were only covered with a facing of sandstone, and could offer but a feeble resistance.

At each fresh salvo of artillery, the entire wall trembled, and it looked as if it would fall to pieces along its entire length, separating from the rampart as if it were the crust of a gigantic *pâté*.

From this moment, the scene around the city resembled the eruption of an immense volcano. Saint-Quentin seemed a salamander of ancient times enclosed within a circle of flame: every ball took away a portion of the wall or shook a house to pieces; the Isle and Rémicourt quarters presented the appearance of one vast ruin. At first, it was attempted to prop and support the houses; but scarcely was one house propped up when the neighbouring house, toppling over, brought down house and props with it. The inhabitants of these devastated quarters withdrew, according as their houses were destroyed, and fled to the Saint-Thomas quarter, which was least of all exposed to the fire; and such is the love of property that they only abandoned their crumbling walls when they saw them just about to fall, and some, reluctant to leave, stayed so long that they were buried in the ruins.

And yet not a voice was raised from the midst of this desolation, from the centre of these ruins, to speak of surrender. Each was convinced of the sanctity of his mission, and seemed to be saying to himself, "We shall all fall, — city, houses, ramparts, citizens, and soldiers; but, by falling, we will save France!"

This tempest of fire, this iron hurricane, lasted from the

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22d to the 26th of August. On the 26th the Flemish, English, and Spanish cannon had hollowed out eleven breaches in the rampart, and all were practicable.

Suddenly, about two in the afternoon, the batteries of the enemy, evidently by common agreement, were silent. A silence of death succeeded the frightful detonations, which had never ceased for the last ninety-six hours, and the besiegers were seen to approach in a crowd along the covered paths.

It was believed the time for storming the city had arrived.

Just after this, a cannon-ball set fire to the huts near the convent of the Jacobins, and an attempt was being made to extinguish it, when suddenly the cry, "To arms!" resounded through the city.

Coligny ran up; he called on the inhabitants to let their houses burn and defend the ramparts.

The inhabitants, without a murmur, abandoned the buckets and pumps, and, taking pikes and arquebuses, hastened to the walls. The women and children stayed behind and saw their dwellings burn.

It was a false alarm; the assault was not to take place on that day. The besiegers were approaching to fire the mines made under the scarps. Doubtless they did not find the ascent sufficiently practicable. The mines were fired, adding new breaches to the first, new ruins to the old, and then the besiegers withdrew.

During this time, the conflagration, abandoned to itself, had devoured thirty houses.

The evening and night were employed in repairing the breaches at the points attacked, and establishing new parapets on the walls.

As to our adventurers, thanks to their legist Procope, their dispositions were made with as much loyalty as discernment.

The common fund was composed of four hundred crowns of gold. This gave to each, in consequence of the death

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of Fracasso and the inheritance derived thereby, exactly fifty crowns. Each took twenty-five for himself, and left the rest in the treasury, which was placed in the cellars of the convent of the Jacobins; after which all took an oath not to lay hands on this reserved fund for a year, and then only in presence of the survivors. Each might dispose of the twenty-five crowns in his possession according to his good pleasure. It was well understood that the part of those who should die in the interval would belong to the survivors. Malemort, who had less prospect of escape than the others, hid his twenty-five crowns, wisely thinking that, if he kept them on him, they would be lost.

On the morrow of the 27th, at daybreak, the cannon renewed its thunders, and the breaches, which had been nearly repaired during the night, became again practicable.

We have said that there were eleven principal ones.

We shall now describe their position, and in what consisted their means of defence. The first, made in the Porte Saint-Jean, was guarded by Comte de Breuil, governor of the city. The second was guarded by the Scotch company of the Earl of Aran; these Scotch were the gaiest and most laborious soldiers of the garrison. The third, opened in the Tour de la Couture, was guarded by the Company of the Dauphin, of which M. de Théligny was formerly lieutenant; this company had for commander M. de Cuisieux, his successor. The fourth, which gutted the Tour Rouge, was guarded by the company of Captain Saint-André and by Lactance and his Jacobins; the Tour Rouge was only fifty steps from the convent of the Jacobins. The fifth, in front of the governor's palace, was guarded by Coligny himself with his company; he had near him Yvonnet, Procope, and Maldent. The sixth, opened in the tower on the left of the Porte de Rémicourt, was guarded by half the company of the admiral under the command of Captain Rambouillet; Pilletrousse, who had friends in this company, had got himself incorporated in it. The seventh was guarded by Captain de Jarnac, of

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whom we have already said a few words; he was very ill, but, ill as he was, he had himself carried to this breach on the morning of the 27th, where, lying on a mattress, he awaited the assault. The eighth, which gave access to the Tour Sainte-Périne, was guarded by three captains whom we have not yet had an opportunity of naming, and who were called Forces, Oger, and Soleil; a fourth, the Sieur de Vaulpergues, had joined them; they commanded soldiers of different arms. The ninth was guarded by Dandelot, with thirty-five men-at-arms and twenty-five or thirty arquebusiers. The tenth, opened in the Tour à l'Eau, was defended by Captain de Lignières and his company. In fine, the eleventh, in the Tour d'Isle, was guarded by Captain Sallavert and the La Fayette company, which the two Scharfensteins and Malemort had joined; they had only to take about thirty steps from their tent to reach the breach.

All these warriors, divided among the different breaches, numbered eight hundred men.

As we have said, the cannon began to roar at daybreak on the 27th, and did not stop for a second until two in the afternoon. It was useless to answer such a fire, which pulverised the ramparts, crumbled the houses, and struck the inhabitants even in the most remote streets. To wait, therefore, was the only policy possible; but, in order that no man capable of bearing arms might be left in doubt as to the necessity of his co-operation, the watchman on the belfry never ceased ringing from daybreak, only interrupting himself occasionally to cry out through a speaking-trumpet from the top of the tower, —

"To arms, citizens! to arms!"

And at the sound of this bell, and at these cries incessantly repeated, the weakest became strong, the most timid took courage.

At two o'clock the fire ceased, and a flag was hoisted by Emmanuel Philibert on the salient of the covered road.

It was the signal of assault.

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Three columns were directed on three points, — one on the convent of the Jacobins, one on the Tour à l'Eau, and the third on the Porte d'Isle.

These three columns were thus composed: that which marched towards the convent of the Jacobins, of the old Spanish bands led by Alonzo de Cazières, and of fifteen hundred Germans under the orders of their Colonel Lazare Swendy; that which marched on the Tour à l'Eau reckoned six Spanish battalions, commanded by Colonel Navarez, and six hundred Walloons under Comte de Mègue; finally, that which marched on the Porte d'Isle was led by Captain Carondelet and Julian Romeron. They had under their orders three Burgundy companies and two thousand English.

It would be impossible to measure, short though it was, the time which elapsed between the moment when the besiegers rushed from the trenches, and that when they were engaged hand to hand with the besieged; in such a case, men live years in the course of a minute.

The shock occurred on the three points threatened. On these three points, nothing was seen for a quarter of an hour but the confusion of a frightful conflict; nothing heard but cries, groans, and blasphemies; then, hanging for a moment on the edges of the crumbling ramparts, the tide which had mounted fell back repulsed, leaving the talus covered with dead.

Every one had done wonders; the three points attacked with fury were defended with desperation. Lactance and his Jacobins were at their best. The enemy were hurled down from the Tour Rouge even into the fosses; but more than twenty monks lay among the dead, with the old Spanish soldiers of Alonzo de Cazières and the Germans of Swendy. The Walloons of Comte de Mégue and the Spaniards of Navarez had not been more successful; and, forced to retreat even to the trenches, they were forming again for a second assault. Finally, at the tower of the Porte d'Isle, the presence of Malemort and the two Scharfensteins

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worked wonders. Carondelet had his arm shattered by a pistol-shot fired by Malemort; and Julian Romeron, overturned by a blow from the mace of Heinrich Scharfenstein and thrown down from the top of the ramparts, had both his legs broken in the fall.

For a moment there was a halt along the entire line. They were taking time to breathe. But the tolling of the bell still made itself heard, and at intervals the voice of the watchman cried at the four corners of the tower, —

"To arms, citizens! to arms!"

It was not a vain cry, for, as we have said, the storming columns were again forming, and, having received a reinforcement, were returning to the attack by the same road, strewed with dead, which they had already traversed.

What made this defence sublime was that all, leaders, soldiers, and citizens, knew it was useless and could not have a successful result; but there was a great duty to be fulfilled, and each fulfilled it, gravely, sacredly, and nobly.

Nothing more gloomy and more terrible — Coligny himself says so — than this second attack, accompanied neither by flourish of trumpet nor roll of drum. Besiegers and besieged approached each other silently, and the only sound heard was that of steel clashing against steel.

The breach which he defended not being attacked, Coligny could follow with his eyes the chances of the struggle, and go where he judged his presence necessary; he saw a part of a Spanish company who had dislodged the arquebusiers of the Tour Rouge, and profiting by this advantage, advanced to the parapet, and were slipping in, one by one, into the tower itself.

Coligny was not at first disturbed by this attack: the road taken by the Spaniards was so narrow and difficult that if the Company of the Dauphin did its duty the besiegers must certainly be repulsed; but to the great astonishment of Coligny, the Spaniards were succeeding one another on the same road, without their march being apparently disturbed.

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Suddenly a frightened soldier came to announce to the admiral that the breach in the Tour Rouge was forced.

It was impossible for Coligny, on account of a boat filled with earth which rose between him and the Tour Rouge, to see what was passing at this point; but, understanding that the most urgent thing for him to do was to run where he was told the enemy was victorious, he summoned five or six men and descended from the rampart, which he reckoned on mounting again at the other side of the traverse, crying, —

"Follow me, my friends; it is here we must face death!"

But he was not halfway when he saw, behind the platform of the windmill, the ensign of the Company of the Dauphin flying in the direction of the Jacobins with other soldiers, while monks and bourgeois were letting themselves be killed rather than recoil a step.

Coligny thought his presence was so much the more urgent at the Tour Rouge as the soldiers were abandoning it, and he redoubled his speed.

But at the moment he was ascending the rampart, he saw that the rampart was taken, and that he had strayed into the midst of the Spanish and German attacking column, already master, not only of the breach, but of the wall.

The admiral looked around him; a single page, almost a child, followed him with a gentleman and a *valet de chambre*.

At the same moment, two men attacked him, one with a sword, while the other was adjusting his arquebuse.

The admiral parried the thrusts of the sword with his mailed arm, and, by the help of the pike which he held in his hand, thrust aside the arquebuse, which fired in the air.

Then the little page, frightened, cried out in Spanish:

"Do not kill M. l'Amiral! do not kill M. l'Amiral!"

"Are you really the admiral?" asked the soldier who had attacked him with his sword.

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"If he is the admiral, he is mine," cried the man with the arquebuse, and he tried to lay his hand on the admiral.

But Coligny, striking the hand aside with the handle of his pike, said, —

"You need not touch me; I surrender, and, with God's help, I shall find such a sum for my ransom that you will both be contented."

Then the two soldiers exchanged a few words in a low voice which the admiral could not hear, and which were doubtless a compact, for they ceased disputing and asked him if the men with him were his, and who were they.

"One is my page, the other my valet, the third a gentleman of my household," replied the admiral. "Their ransom will be paid with mine; but take me out of the way of the Germans; I do not wish to have anything to do with them."

"Follow us," said the two soldiers, "and we will put you in a place of safety."

And, having asked the admiral for his sword, they led him to the breach, which had not been yet scaled, and, helping him to descend, conducted him to the fosse at the entrance of a mine.

There they met Alonzo de Cazières, with whom the soldiers exchanged a few words.

Don Alonzo approached Coligny and saluted him courteously; then, pointing to a group of gentlemen who were issuing from the trench and advancing towards the wall, forming the suite of the generalissimo of the Spanish army, he said, —

"That is the Duke of Savoy; if you have any request to make, address yourself to him."

"I have nothing to say," replied Coligny, "except that I am the prisoner of these brave men, and I desire them to have the amount paid for my ransom."

Emmanuel heard what Coligny said, and remarked, with a smile, —

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"M. l'Amiral, here are two rascals who, if our prisoner is paid for according to his value, are likely to be richer than some princes of my acquaintance."

And, leaving the admiral in the hands of Don Alonzo de Cazières, Emmanuel Philibert mounted the rampart by the same breach the admiral had defended.

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V.

A FUGITIVE.

The inhabitants of Saint-Quentin knew well what a terrible game they were playing, in opposing, to the triple Spanish, Flemish, and English army encircling the walls, that obstinate resistance over which the fortunes of Philip II. had just triumphed.

They never dreamed therefore of asking for mercy, and according to all probability the conqueror never dreamed of granting it.

It was the nature of the wars of this period to carry frightful reprisals in their train. In those armies composed of men of all countries, when the *condottieri* of the same nation often fought against one another, and when money engagements were often badly enough kept by the contracting parties, pillage was considered in the accounts as a part of the pay, and became sometimes, in case of defeat, the only pay obtained; but in this case friends were pillaged instead of enemies.

As we have seen, the defence had been desperate everywhere except at the point where the Company of the Dauphin had weakened. The enemy occupied the Tour Rouge, the admiral was taken, Emmanuel Philibert was on the rampart, where fighting was still going on, not to save the city, but to kill or be killed, at the three breaches: those defended by Captain Soleil, the company of M. de la Fayette, and Dandelot, the admiral's brother.

The same was the case at several points of the city: the Spaniards, on penetrating into the square by the Rue du Billon, found bands of armed citizens defending the cross-roads of Cépy, and the entrance to the Rue de la Fosse.

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However, at the cries of "City taken!" at the glare of the fire and the sight of the smoke, these partial resistances ceased; the breach of Captain Soleil was forced, then that of M. de la Fayette, then finally, the last, that of M. Dandelot.

According as these breaches were taken, great cries were heard, to which succeeded a gloomy silence; the cries were cries of victory, the silence was that of death.

The breach forced, its defenders butchered or held for ransom, — if their appearance showed they were rich enough to be ransomed, — the conquerors next rushed on the part of the city nearest the rampart they had first assaulted, and the pillage began.

It lasted five days; conflagration, violation, and murder, those devastating guests of cities taken by assault, walked along the streets, sat on the thresholds of ruined or deserted houses, and wallowed even on the bloody flagstones of churches.

Nothing was spared, neither women, nor children, nor old men, nor monks, nor nuns. In a feeling of piety for stones which he had not for human beings, Philip II. gave orders to respect the sacred edifices, fearing doubtless that the sacrileges committed would fall on his own head. The order was useless; nothing arrested the destruction spread by the hands of the victors. The church of Saint-Pierre-au-Canal was overturned as by an earthquake. The Collegiate church, perforated by cannon-balls, bereft of its magnificent stained glass windows, which were shattered by the discharges of artillery, was despoiled of its silver-gilt ciboriums, its silver vases and chandeliers; the grand Hôtel-Dieu was burned, and the hospitals of Les Belles-Portes, Notre-Dame, Lembay, Saint-Antoine, the convent of Beguines, and the house of the Seminary were heaps of ruins at the end of these five days.

Once the rampart was seized, once the resistance in the streets was annihilated, each thought only of submitting to his fate or escaping. Some offered their throats to the

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knife or halberd; others took refuge in caves or cellars, where they hoped to avoid the search of their enemies; others, in fine, glided down the walls, hoping to be able to pass between the three armies, which were not very closely united. But almost all those who adopted the last method of escape served as targets for the Spanish arquebusiers or the English archers, and very few ran the gauntlet of the bullets of the one or the arrows of the other.

The butchery went on then, not only in the city, but outside of the city, not only on the ramparts, but in the fosses, the meadows, and even in the rivers, across which some in their desperation tried to swim.

However, night fell, and the fusillades ceased for the time.

About three-quarters of an hour after nightfall, about twenty minutes after the last arquebuse-shot was heard, a slight shiver stirred the reeds on that part of the shore of the Somme extending from the sources of the Grosnard to the cutting made in front of Tourival in order to allow the waters of the river to flow into the fosses of the city.

This shiver was so slight that it would have been impossible for the most piercing eye or the most trained ear to distinguish, at ten paces distant, whether it was caused by the first breezes of the night, or by the movement of some otter engaged in the nocturnal exercise of fishing. All that could be seen was that it arose from the water, which was rather shallow at this spot, and also that, on reaching the outskirts of the reeds, it died away for some minutes, during which something like a body plunging might be heard; at the same time bubbles of water rose from the bottom of the river to the surface.

Some seconds after, a black point appeared in the middle of the channel of the river; but, remaining visible only as long as an animal requires to do in our atmosphere to breathe, it disappeared immediately.

Two or three times again at equal distances, without approaching either bank, and always following the current of the water, the same object disappeared to reappear again.

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Then, in fine, the swimmer, — for, as he got farther from the grief-stricken city, and as a glance to the right and the left assured him that the two banks of the Somme were deserted, the individual whose course we are following appeared to have less dread of being recognised as belonging to the species of the animal kingdom which, by its own private authority, has declared itself the noblest, — then, in fine, we repeat, the swimmer swerved voluntarily from the right line, and after a few vigorous strokes, during which the top of his head alone appeared above the surface of the water, he approached the left bank of the river just at a spot where the shadow of a clump of willows rendered the darkness thicker still than in the open places.

He stopped a moment, held his breath, and, remaining as dumb and motionless as the gnarled trunk against which he leaned, he questioned with all his senses, rendered more subtle by the idea of the peril he had just escaped and that which still menaced him, the air, the earth, and the water.

Everything seemed silent and tranquil; the city alone, covered with a cloud of smoke through which sometimes rose a jet of flame, seemed, as we have said, to be struggling in the tortures of a ghastly agony.

The fugitive, however, from the very fact that he felt almost in safety, appeared to experience the keener regret at abandoning thus a city in which he left, doubtless, memories of friendship or love dear to his heart.

But this regret, keen though it might be, did not for a moment inspire him with the desire of returning into the city; he was contented to heave a sigh, to murmur a name, and, after assuring himself that his poniard, — the only weapon left him, and suspended from his neck by a chain, which, although its material might be dubious during daylight, at night really looked like gold, — after assuring himself, we say, that his poniard could be easily drawn from its sheath, and that a leather belt, to which he seemed to attach great importance, continued to clasp

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beneath his doublet the slender and flexible waist with which nature had endowed him, he ran towards the marshes of the Abbiette at that pace which is a medium between a run and an ordinary walk, and which modern strategy has baptised by the name of the gymnastic step.

For any one at all unfamiliar with the neighbourhood around the city, the road taken by the fugitive would not have been without peril. At the period during which the events occurred which we are relating, all that part of the left bank of the Somme, on which our nocturnal traveller was venturing, was filled with marshes and ponds that could only be crossed by narrow causeways. But what became a peril for an inexperienced man, offered, on the contrary, a chance of safety to one who was acquainted with the passes of the muddy labyrinth; and an invisible friend who followed our man with his eyes, and who anticipated danger to him from the course he was taking, would have been very speedily reassured.

In fact, without ever going aside for a single instant from the line of solid ground which he had to follow, in order not to sink in one of those morasses where the constable had lost so many soldiers, the fugitive crossed the marsh, always keeping the same step, and soon found himself on the first hillock of the undulating plain extending from the village of L'Abbiette to the mill of Cauchy, which, when covered with its harvests of wheat, has all the appearance of a tempestuous sea stirred by the wind.

However, as it was becoming rather difficult to keep up the same step among these harvests which had been partially mown by the enemy in order to obtain straw for their tents or food for their horses, the person whose adventurous course we have been following turned to the left, and was soon treading a well-beaten road; indeed, to meet this road was seemingly the principal object of the clever evolution he had just executed.

As always happens when an aim is reached, our explorer, as soon as he felt the pebbles of the highway

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instead of the stubbles of the plain under his feet, stopped some moments, for the purpose both of looking around him and recovering his breath; then he continued his way on a line that separated him further from the city than any of those he had taken so far. He ran in this fashion for nearly a quarter of an hour, then stopped anew, with eye fixed, mouth half open, and ear stretched.

To the right, a hundred yards away in the plain, stood the mill of Cauchy; its immobility in the darkness gave it double its ordinary size.

But what had brought the fugitive to a standstill was not the sight of this mill, which did not seem to be unknown to him, and which doubtless appeared to him under its true form, not under the form of a giant, as in the case of Don Quixote; what had brought the fugitive to a standstill was a ray of light which suddenly flashed out through the door of the mill, and the noise of a little band of horsemen which reached his ear at the same moment, while a compact and moving mass, growing more and more visible to his eyes, was approaching in his direction.

There was no doubt it was a Spanish patrol which was beating up the country.

The fugitive started on his way.

He was right at the place where the skirmish between the bastard of Waldeck and Emmanuel Philibert occurred, —a skirmish in which certain adventurers of our acquaintance had fared so badly, and which had had for poor Fracasso especially such fatal consequences. On the left was the little wood through which two of the assailants had fled; this wood did not appear to be a stranger to the unknown traveller; he darted towards it with the rapidity of a startled deer, and found himself under the shelter of a copse of trees twenty or twenty-five years old, above which rose other mighty trunks that seemed like ancestors of all this little grove.

It was time; the troop was marching along the road, at about fifteen yards from him, at the moment when he vanished into the little wood.

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Whether that he thought his power of hearing increased by contact with the ground, or that he believed there was more security in lying flat on his stomach than in standing erect, the fugitive threw himself on the earth, and remained as motionless and as silent as the trunk at the foot of which he was stretched.

Our man was not mistaken; it was a party of the enemy's cavalry which was scouring the country, and which, perhaps, having learned of the capture of the city by some messenger or by the flames and smoke which rose above the horizon, was going to claim its share of the booty.

A few Spanish words uttered by the troopers, as they passed within hearing of the fugitive, left no doubt as to their identity.

He became more motionless and dumb than ever.

He remained in this condition until these nocturnal prowlers were at a safe distance, until the sound of their voices had entirely faded and even the hoof-beats of their horses were no longer heard; then he raised his head, and either for the purpose of observing the best route to follow, so as to avoid such meetings in future, or to still the pulsations of his heart, whose violence denoted the strength of his emotions, he rose slowly, first on his knees, then on his hands, crept along for about six feet, and, feeling by the roughness of the roots springing from the earth that he was protected by the shadow of one of those immense trees towering here and there above the copse already mentioned by us, he turned round, and found himself sitting, with his back against the trunk and his face towards the road.

Only then did the fugitive feel like breathing freely, and, although his clothes were still wet with the waters of the Somme, he wiped his forehead covered with sweat, and passed his small and elegant hand through the curls of his long hair.

No sooner had he finished this operation, which made him heave a sigh of contentment, than it seemed to him

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as if some object, moving above his head, was also caressing in similar fashion the fair locks of which he evidently, in the ordinary circumstances of life, took particular care.

Desirous to know what was this object, animate or inanimate, that ventured on such liberties, the young man — it was easy to guess, by the suppleness and elasticity of his movements, that the fugitive was a young man — threw himself backwards, and, leaning on his elbows, tried to distinguish in the thick darkness the object which for a moment had excited his curiosity.

But all around him was so sombre that he could only distinguish a straight line standing at one time vertically above his head, at another above his breast, and waving stiffly backwards and forwards at the will of the breeze that was drawing from the surrounding trees those vague, nocturnal murmurs which make the traveller shudder in spite of himself, disposed, as he is likely to be, to take them for the wailings of souls in pain.

Our senses, we know, are seldom sufficient singly to give us a clear idea of the objects with which they are brought in contact, and are rendered complete only by the aid of one another. Our fugitive therefore resolved to complete the sight by the touch, the eye by the hand; he stretched out his hand, and the result seemed to turn him to stone; then suddenly, as if he had forgotten that the precarious situation in which he was, enjoined silence and immobility, he uttered a scream, and rushed out of the wood, a prey to the most frightful terror.

It was not a hand that had just amorously caressed his black hair, it was a foot, and that foot belonged to a man who was hanged.

It is unnecessary to say that this unfortunate was our old acquaintance the poet Fracasso, who, as the report had run, found, after the unlucky skirmish of the bastard of Waldeck, in the past participle, the rhyme he had so long vainly searched for in the infinitive.

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VI.

TWO FUGITIVES.

The stag started anew by the hounds does not clear the woods and bound over the plain more speedily than did the dark-haired young man, who appeared to be troubled with a violent nervous susceptibility in respect to the hanged, — a class of people, however, who are much less to be dreaded after the operation than before it.

The only precaution he took, when at the outskirts of the little coppice, was to turn his back on Saint-Quentin, and run in a direction opposite to the city; the only desire he appeared to have was to get away from there as soon as possible.

The fugitive consequently for more than an hour went at a pace that would have seemed impossible in the case of a professional runner, so that in three quarters of an hour he had made nearly two leagues.

These two leagues accomplished, he found himself beyond Essigny-le-Grand, and on this side of Gibercourt.

Two things forced the fugitive to a momentary halt: first, his breath was failing him; next, the ground was becoming so uneven that it was necessary, I do not say to run, but even to walk with extreme caution, under penalty of stumbling at every step.

Consequently, it being clearly impossible to go farther, he lay down on one of the little knolls around him, panting like a stag at bay.

Besides, he had without doubt reflected that he must have long passed the Spanish outposts; and as to the hanged man, if he could have come down from his tree and pursued him, he would not have waited three-quarters

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of an hour in leaving the other world and having his little fun in this one.

Our young fugitive might have made a reflection on this latter point which would have been still more correct: if the hanged were able to come down from the gibbet, whether that gibbet stretches out its dry and naked arm at the corner of a cross-road, or a leafy and succulent branch in the forest, the situation is not so agreeable for them that they would not descend on the first day, if they could. Now, if our calculation is correct, twenty days had elapsed between the battle of Saint-Quentin and the capture of the city; and since Fracasso had remained patiently hanging from his rope for twenty days, it is probable that he would continue to do so, at least until the rope should break.

While our fugitive was recovering his breath, and no doubt giving way to the reflections we have just made, the church clock of Gibercourt struck eleven and three-quarters, and the moon was rising behind the woods of Rémigny.

As a result, when, after these reflections, the fugitive raised his head, he was able, in the light of the trembling moonbeams, to recognise the landscape of which he formed the most animated part.

He was on the field of battle, on the cemetery hastily constructed by Catherine de Laillier, mother of the Seigneur of Gibercourt; the little knoll on which he had sought a moment's repose was nothing else than the mound of a grave in which twenty French soldiers had found eternal rest.

It looked as if the fugitive could not get out of the funereal circle which seemed to surround him ever since he left Saint-Quentin.

However, as it appears that, for certain organisations, the dead bodies sleeping three feet under ground are less frightful than those swinging three feet above, our fugitive was satisfied this time with yielding to a nervous trembling accompanied by that little shake in the voice

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which denotes that an icy thrill is passing between the hide and the flesh of that poor animal, the most easily frightened of all next to the hare, — namely, man.

Then, though still breathing hard from the headlong race he had just finished, our fugitive strained his ears to listen to the cries of an owl that arose, regular and melancholy, from a clump of trees left standing as if to point out the centre of the cemetery.

But soon, closely as this doleful chant appeared to hold his attention, his brow became full of wrinkles, and his head turned slightly from right to left, as if his mind was affected by another sound blending with the one he was attracted by.

This noise was more material than the first; the first seemed to descend from heaven to earth, the second seemed to rise from earth to heaven. It was the noise of the far-away gallop of a horse so well imitated in the Latin language, according to the saying of professors, lost in admiration for two thousand years, in presence of the verses of Virgil: —

"Quadrupedante putrem sonitu quatit ungula campum."

I would not dare to say that our fugitive knew this verse; but most undoubtedly he knew the gallop of a horse, for scarcely was the sound of this gallop perceptible to human ears when the young man was on his legs and questioning the horizon with his eyes. However, as the horse was not galloping on a highway, but on a dusty ground ploughed by the marches and counter-marches of the French and Spanish armies, and as this ground, furrowed by cannon-balls and covered with the remains of the harvest, had not the capacity of yielding a very clear sound, it happened that horse and rider were in reality much nearer the fugitive than the latter had in the beginning imagined.

The first idea that came to our young man was that the individual lately hanged whose acquaintance he had so

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unpleasantly made, having no confidence in his legs, on account of their stiffness, had borrowed from the stables of Death some fantastic steed or other, with whose aid he had pursued him; and the rapid march of the rider, the little noise made by the horse on the way, rendered this supposition possible, particularly in the case of a nervous organisation abnormally excited by the events that had just occurred and the lugubrious aspect of the theatre on which they were accomplished.

One thing was certain, however; namely, that horse and rider were very nearly within five hundred yards of the young man, and that the latter was beginning to distinguish them both, as far as it was possible to distinguish by the dim light of the moon, now in its last quarter, the spectres of a horse and his rider.

Perhaps, if the fantastic centaur had shaped his course twenty paces to the right or left of our fugitive, the latter would not have budged, and would have lain in the shadow somewhere between two tombs while the apocalyptic vision was passing, instead of taking to flight; but no, he was in a direct line with the course of the new-comer, and it was necessary to fly as quickly as possible, if he did not want to be treated by the infernal horseman as Heliodorus, twenty years before, had been treated by the heavenly horseman.

He gave one rapid glance towards the point of the horizon opposite him from which the danger came, and about three hundred yards in front of him, he perceived, like a gloomy curtain, the outskirts of the Rémigny woods.

He thought for a moment of making for the village of Gibercourt, or for the village of Ly-Fontaines, placed, as he was, midway between these hamlets, the first being on his right and the second on his left; but after calculating the distances, he recognised that he was at least five hundred yards from each of them, while it was hardly three hundred to the borders of the wood.

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It was, then, to the wood he ran with the fleetness of a stag whom the pack, having missed the trail, has let rest for a few moments his stiffened limbs; but at the very moment our fugitive exchanged inaction for motion, it seemed to him that the rider uttered a cry of joy which had nothing human in it. This cry, borne to his ears by the vaporous wings of the night, gave fresh nimbleness to his feet; and as the noise of this chase frightened the owl hid in the clump of trees, who fled, uttering a last wail more doleful than the others, he envied those rapid and silent wings by whose aid the sombre bird of night was soon lost in the curtain of woods stretched out before him.

But if the fugitive had not the wings of the owl, the horse of the rider pursuing him appeared to have those of the Chimæra; while leaping across the tombs, the young man cast a look behind him, and he saw horse and rider drawing nearer and nearer to him with frightful rapidity, and at the same time increasing enormously in size.

Moreover, the horse was neighing and the horseman was howling.

If the arteries of the temples of the fugitive did not beat so strongly, he would have understood that there was nothing supernatural in the neighing of the horse, and that the howling of the rider was simply the repetition of the word *Stop!* uttered in all sorts of tones, from that of entreaty to that of menace; but, as in spite of this ascending gamut, the fugitive, far from stopping, redoubled his efforts to gain the wood, the horseman also redoubled his efforts to reach the fugitive.

However, although the breathing of the latter was as hoarse as that of the quadruped pursuing him, he had managed to get within fifty yards of the outskirts of the wood; but then the horse and the horseman were not more than a hundred yards from him.

These last fifty yards were for the fugitive what the last fifty strokes are to a sailor tossed by the waves, and

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who must reckon on them as his sole chance of reaching the shore; and yet the shipwrecked sailor has this chance that, if his strength fail him, the flow of the tide may bear him to the strand alive, while no such hope could encourage the fugitive, if — as was more than probable — his legs failed him before reaching that blessed shelter where the owl had gone first, and seemed now to be mocking with her dismal voice his last impotent efforts.

With arms strained, body bent forward, parched throat, gasping breath, a tempestuous buzzing in the ears and a cloud of blood in the eyes, our fugitive was within twenty yards of the wood, when, turning round, he saw that the horse, which never ceased neighing, and the rider, who never ceased shouting, were within ten yards of him.

Then he made an effort to redouble his speed; but his voice died away in his throat, his limbs grew stiff. He heard something like the rumbling of the thunder behind him, felt something like a breath of flame on his shoulder, experienced a shock like that which a rock hurled by a catapult might have caused, and rolled, half-fainting, down into the ditch of the little wood.

Then he saw, as through a mist of flame, the rider get off his horse, or rather leap out of the saddle, run up to him, support, and raise him up, seat him on the slope, and, after examining him by the moonlight, suddenly cry out, —

"By the soul of Luther, it is our dear Yvonnet!"

At these words, the adventurer, who was beginning to recognise the fact that the rider was human, made an effort to collect his senses, riveted his haggard eyes on the person who, after such a savage chase, now addressed him with such reassuring words, and in a voice which the dryness of his throat rendered like the rattle of one in the last agony, murmured, —

"By the soul of the Pope, it is Monseigneur Dandelot!"

We know why Yvonnet fled before Monseigneur Dandelot; it remains for us to explain why Monseigneur Dande-

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lot pursued Yvonnet. For this purpose, it will be enough to take a glance backward, and take up the thread of events where we have left it drop; namely, at the moment when Emmanuel Philibert planted his foot on the breach of Saint-Quentin.

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VII.

ADVENTURER AND CAPTAIN.

We have told how Yvonnet, Maldent, and Procope defended the same breach as Coligny.

The breach had not been difficult to defend, not having been attacked.

We have told also how the neighbouring breach had been surprised by the Spanish companies, and how the Dauphin's Company had, from a sad want of courage, allowed it to be taken.

Finally, we have told how, on seeing what was occurring on the left, Coligny ran forward, calling on those about him to follow, and how, after the détour which the traverse forced him to make, he mounted the rampart which the Spaniards were already attacking, crying, —

"It is here that we must die!"

This generous determination was surely in the heart of the admiral, and undoubtedly he did all he could to give it effect, although he did not die on the breach, either on account of the favour or the vengeance of Heaven, — according as we look at his assassination on the festival of Saint-Bartholomew from the Catholic or the Protestant point of view.

But this opinion, courageously expressed by a great-hearted general, bearing on his shoulders the weight of such military and political responsibility, — that it is necessary to die on the day one is vanquished, — this opinion was undoubtedly not that of the three adventurers who had hired out to him their arms, through the agency of Attorney Procope, for the defence of the city.

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Then, seeing that the city was taken, and that there was no means of defending it, they conceived that their engagement was legally dead; and each one individually, without communicating his opinion to his co-associates, fled in whatever direction he hoped to find safety.

Maldent and Procope disappeared at the angle of the convent of the Jacobins; and as we have no business with them at the present moment, we shall abandon them to their good or ill fortune, in order to follow that of their companion Yvonnet.

His first idea was, we must do him that justice, to take the road to the Vieux-Marché and offer his sword and poniard to his good friend Mademoiselle Gudule Pauquet; but doubtless he thought that, however formidable such weapons might be in his experienced hands, they could, under the circumstances, be of only slight utility to a young lady whose natural beauty and grace were a far more efficacious protection against the anger of the conquerors than all the swords and poniards in the world.

Besides, he knew that the father and uncle of Gudule had prepared a hiding-place in the cellars of their houses for their most precious objects, — and surely the most precious object of all was their daughter and niece, — which hiding-place they regarded as beyond the reach of discovery, and in which they had collected provisions enough to last ten days. Now, furious as was the pillage, it was probable that before the tenth day the leaders would restore order in the unfortunate city, and, order once restored, Gudule would put her nose out of her hiding-place and reappear in the light of the sun.

The sack of the city would then, in all probability, pass by, owing to the precautions taken, without the young girl suffering any harm; and, like the first Christians in the catacombs, she would hear in security from the place in which she was concealed the roar of carnage and murder above her head.

Once convinced that his presence, instead of being use-

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ful to mademoiselle, could only be hurtful to her, Yvonnet, besides not being at all anxious to bury himself alive for eight or ten days like a badger or a marmot, resolved, at any risk, to remain in the full light of day, and, instead of hiding in some corner of the besieged city, hastened to place the greatest possible distance between it and him, during that evening and the following night.

Abandoning Maldent and Procope, who, as we have stated, turned the corner of the Jacobin convent, he began by threading the Rue des Ligniers, made a cross-cut to the extremity of the Rue de la Sellerie, took the Rue des Brebis, went up the cross-road of Les Campions, went down as far as the Ruelle de la Brassette, glided along the Rue des Canonniers, and gaining the church of Sainte-Catherine by the Rue de la Poterie, he found himself on the rampart between the tower and postern of that name.

During his progress, without stopping for this double operation, Yvonnet unbuckled his sword-belt and the fastenings of his cuirass; and as neither sword nor cuirass could be of any use to him in the plan of flight he had adopted, he threw his sword over a wall of the Rue Brassette, and his cuirass behind a pillar in the Rue de la Poterie. On the other hand, he made sure of his poniard by suspending it from the gilt copper chain which proudly surrounded his neck, and he buckled tightly around his waist the belt containing the twenty-five gold crowns which constituted the half of his fortune; for if Malemort, not being able to fly, had buried his, Yvonnet, who relied on the agility of his legs to save life and crowns, had not the slightest idea of abandoning the part of the treasure he was permitted to dispose of.

After arriving at the rampart, Yvonnet strode resolutely along the parapet; and then bracing himself, and with his arms pressed to his side, he leaped into the fosse filled with fresh water that wound along the bottom of the wall. He passed so quickly that the sentinels paid scarcely any attention to him; moreover, the cries, resounding at

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the same moment from the other side of the city, had much more interest for them than the man or stone they heard rolling into the fosse, and not seen again above the water, whose widening circles were breaking on one side against the wall, on the other against the turfy slope of the Grosnard marshes.

The individual whose fall had caused these multiplied circles was not anxious to reappear, and after swimming under water for some time, went and crouched among a bed of water-lilies, whose protecting leaves concealed from all eyes his head buried in the water up to the mouth.

From that point, he was witness of a sight that was very capable of preparing his nerves for the irritable condition we have seen them reach.

The city once taken, many combatants followed the same course which he did, — some, as he had done, jumping from the top of the rampart, others quite simply flying through the Sainte-Catherine postern.

But all unfortunately, instead of waiting till nightfall, attempted to escape at once. Now, to escape at once was impossible, seeing the circle the English had drawn carefully parallel to that side of the wall, from the old causeway of Vermand to the banks of the Somme.

All the fugitives were, then, received with arquebuse-shots or arrows and driven to the marsh, where, to the delight of the English, — excellent marksmen, as is well known, — they served admirably as targets.

Two or three bodies, falling backwards, rolled to where Yvonnet was, and then were carried away by the current of the water to join the course of the Somme.

This gave the adventurer an idea: it was to play the part of a corpse, and by keeping rigid and motionless, to gain alive the middle of the stream which was bearing away the dead.

All went well up to the spot where the waters of the fosses fall into the Somme; but when he arrived there, Yvonnet, on turning his head round and cautiously open-

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ing his eyes, saw a double hedge of Englishmen scattered along both banks, who, not having any living persons to aim at, were firing at the dead as an amusement.

The young man, instead of maintaining the cadaverous rigidity which kept him on the surface of the water, rolled himself into a ball, sank to the bottom, and with four strokes gained the forest of reeds, where he was safely concealed, and from which we have seen him issue in order to reach the other bank.

As we have already followed our traveller from the moment he reappeared in the shadow of the willows until he fell gasping at the outskirts of the Rémigny wood, it is useless, at least for the moment, to trouble ourselves any further about him.

We shall therefore leave him and follow Monseigneur Dandelot, giving full details of all the incidents that had just happened to this illustrious brother of the admiral, whose friendly face had just drawn a joyous cry of recognition from Yvonnet.

We have said that the breach guarded by Dandelot was the last taken.

Dandelot was not only a general, but a soldier; he had fought with halberd and sword as well as the meanest reiter in the army could have done.

As nothing distinguished him from others except his courage, he was respected for his courage, which had yielded to numbers only; a dozen men attacked and disarmed him, knocked him down and brought him prisoner to the camp, without having the slightest idea as to the identity of the captain, who had, we will not say surrendered, but been taken prisoner by them.

Once in the camp, he was recognised by the constable and admiral, who, while concealing his name and their interest in him as uncle and brother, pledged themselves to pay a thousand crowns for his ransom whenever the ransoms of these two illustrious captives were settled.

But it was not possible to hide the rank of the prisoner

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from Emmanuel Philibert, who invited Dandelot to supper, as he had done Montmorency and Coligny, but at the same time recommended an equally strict watch to be kept on the third prisoner as on the two others.

The supper was prolonged to half-past ten at night, with a courteousness worthy of the fine days of chivalry. Emmanuel Philibert did his best to make all these French nobles, prisoners as on the morrow of Poitiers, Crécy, and Agincourt, forget they were at the table of their conqueror, and there was infinitely more talk of the siege of Metz and the battle of Rémy, during the evening, than of the battle of Saint-Laurent and the storming of Saint-Quentin.

At half-past ten, as we have said, they rose from table; tents had been prepared for the noble prisoners in the very centre of the camp, within a palisaded enclosure, the only entrance to which was by a narrow opening guarded by two sentinels.

In addition, the enclosure was surrounded on the outside by a circle of sentries.

Often, during the long winter nights of the siege, had Dandelot gazed, from the top of the walls, on the gigantic camp lying at his feet. He knew the quarters of each leader, the position of the tents, the intervals kept between the men of the different nations, and even the peculiarities of the ground over which streamers were now floating around the city.

Since he became a prisoner, — and we know he had not been one long, — one single idea, like the weight of a pendulum, was beating on both sides of the skull of Dandelot.

This idea was that of escaping.

He was bound by no promise, and, as we have said, he had not surrendered; he had been taken, and he judged rightly that the sooner he put his idea in execution, the better would be his chances of success.

Our readers will not be astonished, therefore, to learn

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that no sooner did he leave the quarters of Emmanuel Philibert for the tent of the prisoners, than his eye began to question eagerly all the objects presented to his view, with the desire of making of the most futile and insignificant of these objects, at a given moment, a means of salvation.

An officer was about to be sent by Emmanuel Philibert to Cambray, to announce the capture of the city and carry with him a list of the prisoners of note.

This list was further increased during supper; and the officer, after Emmanuel took leave of his guests, entered the tent of the generalissimo, in order that the latter might add to the list the new names that must be added.

A horse from Emmanuel's stables, the fleetest they contained, was standing ten yards from the quarters of the prince, the bridle tied round one of the saddle-bows and the bit held by a groom.

Dandelot approached the courses as a lover of horses naturally attracted by the presence of a fine thorough-bred; then, justifying his reputation as one of the best riders in the French army, he leaped into the saddle, dug his spurs into the horse's sides, knocked down the groom, and set out at a gallop.

The prostrate groom shouted for help, but Dandelot was already twenty yards from the point where he started. He passed like a vision before the tents of Comte de Mègue; the sentry aimed at him, but the match of the arquebuse went out. Another sentry, armed with a musket, suspecting that the cavalier who was passing like a flash was the object of the cries now resounding from all quarters, fired on him and missed; five or six soldiers tried to bar the way with their halberds, but he overturned some, leaped over others, passed them all, encountered the Somme on his course, bounded over a third part of it, instead of trying to cut the current, let his horse be carried on by it, and in the midst of a fusillade which had no other result than to carry off his hat and make holes in his breeches,

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without even grazing the skin, he drew near the other bank.

When he arrived there, he was almost safe.

Consummate horseman as he was, he had too speedy a knowledge of the horse between his legs to dread the pursuit of other horses over which he had just gained five or six minutes; the only thing to be feared was if some ball were to knock down his horse or so wound it as to prevent him from continuing his way.

Consequently, Dandelot was for a moment anxious as he got on firm ground; this moment was short. After galloping for some time, Dandelot saw that the horse was as safe as himself.

Dandelot was not acquainted with the country, but he was acquainted with the principal towns around Saint-Quentin, — Laon, La Fère, and Ham; he guessed instinctively where Paris lay, at twenty-five or twenty-six leagues from these places. The main point for him was to get out of danger; he spurred straight on before him, and naturally found himself on the line of Gauchy, Gruoïs, and Essigny-le-Grand.

On coming in sight of the latter village, the cavalier was able, as the moon had risen, to form a notion, not of the road he travelled nor of the place where he was, but of the general aspect of the landscape.

Dandelot, it will be remembered, was not present at the battle; he could not then be struck with the aspect presented by the field of battle, which had so troubled Yvonnet.

He continued his course, slackening, however, the pace of his steed, and passed by the village of Benay and between the two mills of Hinocourt, casting eager glances on his left and right. What our cavalier was searching for was some single traveller, some peasant of the neighbourhood, who could give him information as to the place where he was, and serve him as guide, or at least put him on his road.

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This was what was making him rise every moment in his stirrups and gaze round the horizon as far as his eyes could reach.

Suddenly, in the midst of the ground broken for the cemetery of Le Piteux, it seemed to him as if he saw a human shadow; but the shadow appeared as desirous of flying as he was of reaching it. The shadow, indeed, fled with the speed of a hare; Dandelot gave chase. The shadow made for the wood of Rémigny; and by all means possible to a rider, — that is to say, by spurs, knees, and voice, — he increased the speed of his horse, clearing hillocks, hedges, and streams, in order to reach these cursed woods before the shadow he was pursuing, which would resemble that of the light-footed Achilles, if the terror by which he was evidently inspired did not render him unworthy of that victorious name.

The shadow was only twenty yards from the coppice. Dandelot was only thirty from the shadow; he made one final effort, and we have seen the result of it. The shadow — which, as he drew nearer, took the solidity of a body — rolled at his feet, struck by the breast of the horse. He leaped from the saddle to bring help to this fugitive whose information might be so valuable to him; and in the poor devil, gasping, almost unconscious, and half-dead from fright, he recognised, to his great joy as well as to his great astonishment, the adventurer Yvonnet.

As to Yvonnet, with equal astonishment, but with still greater joy, he recognised also the brother of the admiral, Monseigneur Dandelot de Coligny.

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VIII.

WAITING.

The news of the battle of Saint-Quentin resounded like an unlooked-for thunderbolt throughout the length and breadth of France, and found its echo especially in the château of Saint-Germain. Never had Montmorency, crotchety and ignorant old soldier, greater need, if he was not to fall into complete disgrace, of the inexplicable support lent him by Diane de Poitiers' constant and unchanging favour in urging his claims on Henri II.

In fact, the blow was terrible: one-half of the nobility engaged with the Duc de Guise in the conquest of Naples, and the other half annihilated. A few gentlemen, escaped gasping and bleeding from that great butchery, were grouped around the Duc de Nevers, who had been wounded in the thigh; and this was all the active force left to France.

Four or five cities badly protected by wretched ramparts, badly supplied with munitions and provisions, badly provided with garrisons, — Ham, La Fère, Le Catelet, — and, like a sentinel lost in the midst of the fire, the least strong, the worst defended, the least tenable of all.

Three hostile armies, the first two exasperated by a long alternation of defeats and victories, the third quite new and fresh, allured by the memories of Crécy and Agincourt, and anxious to see that famous Paris, a glimpse of whose walls had been obtained under Charles VI.; that is to say, a century and a half before.

A king isolated, without personal genius, brave, but with that bravery peculiar to Frenchmen, capable of being an excellent soldier, incapable of being a mediocre general.

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For advisers, the Cardinal de Guise and Catherine de Médicis; that is to say, the guileful policy of Italy added to French ruse and Lorraine pride.

Moreover, a frivolous court of queens and princesses, of gay and light women: little Queen Mary, little Princess Élisabeth, Madame Marguerite of France, Diane de Poitiers, and her daughter, — now almost betrothed to one of the sons of the Connétable de Montmorency, François Charles Henri, — and finally, little Princess Marguerite.

So the fatal news of the loss of the battle of Saint-Quentin, or Saint-Laurent, seemed, in all probability, but the forerunner of two events not less terrible, — the capture of Saint-Quentin and the march of the Spanish, Flemish, and English armies on Paris.

The king, therefore, began by making secret preparations for a retreat on Orleans, — that old fortress of France which, retaken by a maid more than a hundred years before, had become the tabernacle of the holy ark of the French monarchy.

The queen, the three princes, and the little princess were desired to hold themselves in readiness to start at any moment of the day or night, at the first order given.

As for the king, he was determined to join the remnant of his army, wherever it might be, and combat with them until he shed the last drop of his blood.

All measures were taken for the succession of the Dauphin François, in case of his death, with Catherine de Médicis for regent and the Cardinal de Lorraine for adviser.

Moreover, couriers, as we think we have already mentioned, had been sent to Duc François de Guise to hasten his return, and lead back with him all he could lead back of the Army of Italy.

These dispositions taken, Henri II. waited anxiously, with his ear turned towards the highway from Picardy.

Then he learned that, contrary to all probability, and

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even contrary to all hope, Saint-Quentin was still holding out. Fifteen thousand men had been annihilated under its walls; the heroic city was struggling against three victorious armies with four or five hundred soldiers of all arms. It is true that, besides the soldiers, Saint-Quentin possessed that valiant body of citizens whose courage we have seen tested.

The taking of the city was looked forward to for two or three days with the same anxiety.

No such thing happened. It was learned, on the contrary, that Dandelot had entered the place with some hundred men, and that the admiral and he had taken an oath to bury themselves under the ruins of the city. Now, it was known that when Coligny and Dandelot took such oaths, they kept them. The king was therefore somewhat reassured: the danger still existed, but it was less imminent.

All the hope of France was, as we see, concentrated on Saint-Quentin.

Henri II. prayed to heaven that the city might hold out for eight days. Meanwhile, in order to be within reach of speedier news, he started for Compiègne; at Compiègne, he was only a few leagues from the theatre of war.

Catherine de Médicis accompanied him.

When sound advice was needed, Henri had recourse to Catherine; when he desired to pass a pleasant moment, he sought Diane de Poitiers.

The Cardinal de Guise remained at Paris to watch and encourage the Parisians.

In case of urgency, the king was to join the army, if there still existed an army, to encourage it by his presence; Catherine would return to Saint-Germain and make arrangements for the departure of the rest of the royal family.

Henri found the population much less dismayed than he feared; the custom of the armies of the fourteenth, fifteenth, and sixteenth centuries of not venturing a step in their conquests until they had taken possession of the

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cities on their way, gave a little respite to Compiègne, protected by Ham, Le Catelet, and La Fère.

Henri took up his residence in the château.

At the same moment spies were sent in the direction of Saint-Quentin, in order to get information as to the state of the place, and couriers were despatched to Laon and Soissons, to inquire what had become of the army.

The spies returned with the news that Saint-Quentin was holding out well, and did not show the least appearance of surrendering; the couriers returned, saying that two or three thousand men — all that remained of the army — were rallying at Laon around the Duc de Nevers.

Moreover, of these two or three thousand men the Duc de Nevers was making the best possible use.

He knew the delays of this war of sieges which — Saint-Quentin once carried — the Spanish army was going to undertake, and therefore he devoted his whole attention to reinforcing the towns capable of retarding the march of the enemy. He sent Comte de Sancerre to Guise, where the latter led his own troop of cavalry, that of Prince de la Roche-sur-Yon and the two companies of Estrées and Cuisieux. He sent Captain Bordillon to La Fère with five companies of foot and the same of cavalry. In fine, Baron de Polignac set out for Le Catelet, M. d'Humières for Péronne, M. de Chausnes for Corbie, M. de Séšois for Ham, M. de Clermont d'Amboise for Saint-Dizier, Bouchavannes for Coucy, and Montigny for Chauny.

As for himself, he remained at Laon with a corps of a thousand men; it was there the king was to send him whatever new troops he might levy, and the reinforcements expected from other parts of France.

Such was the first dressing applied to the wound, but nothing told yet that the wound was not mortal.

It would be difficult to imagine anything sadder than this old château of Compiègne, gloomy enough in itself, but rendered more so by the presence of its two royal guests.

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Whenever Henri II. came to this residence, — and he usually did so three or four times a year, — it was to people château, town, and fort with that magnificent court of young ladies and young lords which he always carried in his train; it was to fill the Gothic halls and corridors with music of festival instruments; it was to make the forest re-echo with sound of horn and baying of hounds.

This time it was not so. Towards the close of the day, a heavy chariot stopped at the gate of the château, without awakening the curiosity of the inhabitants of the city it had just traversed. The porter was hardly interested in this event, apparently so unimportant, — a man of forty years, with an almost African complexion, a black beard, and hollow eyes; a woman of thirty-six, with skin white and delicate, sparkling eyes, superb teeth, and black hair, descended from this carriage, followed by three or four officers in waiting. The porter regarded them with astonishment, cried out, "The king! the queen!" then, on a sign to be silent made by Henri, conducted them into the interior court, closed the gate behind them, and all was over.

The next day, it was known in Compiègne that the king and Catherine de Médicis had arrived the evening before, escorted by the night alone, less sad and gloomy than they, and were dwelling in the château.

The population was at once excited, the people gathered together, and with cries of "*Vive le roi! vive la reine!*" proceeded to the princely residence.

Henri was always very much loved; Catherine was not yet hated.

The king and queen appeared on the old iron balcony.

"My friends," said the king, "I have come into your walls to be myself the defender of the marches of France. From here, my eyes and my ears will remain constantly fixed on Saint-Quentin. I hope the enemy may not come here; but, in any case, let each make preparations for defence, as the brave people of Saint-Quentin have done. Whoever

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has news, good or bad, from the besieged city, will be welcome at the château as the bearer of it."

Shouts of "*Vive le roi!*" resounded anew. Henri and Catherine made that royal gesture of placing the hand on the heart which has so long abused the people, and retired backwards. The windows were closed behind them; then every one went to prepare for the defence, and the king appeared again no more.

The gardener, when questioned, said that he was in the habit of walking in the gloomiest alleys of the park, sometimes until one or two in the morning, stopping suddenly, listening motionless, often even applying his ear to the ground, in order to catch the far-off detonations of the cannon. But, as we know, all premature attacks had ceased, with the object of giving Emmanuel Philibert time to prepare the general attack.

Then the king would return to the château, without any information, and with increased anxiety, often went up to a sort of tower, from which there was a view of the Saint-Quentin road for a considerable distance, up to where the Laon and Ham highways branched off; his eyes questioned every traveller appearing on this route, at once dreading and desiring to find in him the messenger he was waiting for always.

On the 24th, Henri was walking as usual in the park, when suddenly a distant rumbling startled him. He stopped and listened; but he had no need to apply his ear to the earth to understand that thundering discharges of artillery were succeeding one another without interruption.

For three days, far into the night and long before sunrise, the same sounds were heard; Henri, listening to this awful echo, could not understand how a single house in Saint-Quentin was left standing.

On the 27th, at two in the afternoon, the noise ceased.

What had happened? What meant this silence, after the frightful sounds that preceded it?

Without doubt, Saint-Quentin, less privileged than those

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fabulous salamanders which François I. had placed in his coat of arms, had succumbed in a circle of fire.

He waited till seven or eight in the evening, listening to hear if the sounds that had ceased would not burst forth again. He still hoped that the besiegers, from weariness, would be forced to grant terms to the city.

However, at nine in the evening, he could no longer resist his anxiety; he despatched two or three couriers, with orders to take different roads, so that, if one of them fell into the hands of the enemy, the others at least might have a chance of escaping.

He wandered in the park until midnight; then he returned to the château, lay down, and vainly sought sleep in his feverish sheets; but he could not sleep, and, rising at daybreak, he directed his steps to his observatory.

No sooner was he there than he saw, at the extremity of that road so often explored by his eyes, clouds of dust on the path which the first rays of the sun were beginning to gild, and a horse galloping towards the town with two riders on his back.

Henri had not a moment's doubt; these two riders must be messengers bringing news from Saint-Quentin. He sent persons to meet them, in order that they might not be delayed at the Noyon gate. A quarter of an hour after, the horse stopped before the portcullis of the château; and Henri uttered a cry of surprise, almost of joy, on recognising Dandelot, and seeing behind him, standing respectfully on the threshold of the door, a second personage, whose face was not unfamiliar, although he could not recall, at the first glance, where he had seen it.

Our reader, who has probably a better memory than King Henri II., and whose memory we shall assist on this point, will recall that it was at the château of Saint-Germain, when our adventurer served as squire to the unfortunate Théligny, afterwards killed during the first days of the siege.

We can hardly be required, because Dandelot and Yvonnet happened to be riding the same horse, to relate how,

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after the mutual recognition at the outskirts of the Rémigny wood, the best harmony was established between the fugitive flying and the fugitive pursuing; how Yvonnet, who knew the country by heart, having explored it by night and day in every fashion, offered his services as guide to Dandelot, and how, in fine, in exchange for these services, the admiral's brother invited Mademoiselle Gudule's lover to ride behind him, — an arrangement which had this double advantage of sparing the legs of the adventurer and not delaying the captain.

The horse would perhaps have preferred some other adjustment; but he was a noble animal, full of fire and courage; he had evidently done his best, and actually spent only three hours and a half in clearing the distance between Gibercourt and Compiègne, — and that distance was nearly eleven leagues!

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IX.

THE PARISIANS.

THE news brought by the two messengers was news that was soon told, but on which the listeners question again and again.

After the summary recital which was first made by Dandelot, of the capture of the city, the king passed to details; and he soon learned, partly from the captain, partly from the adventurer, almost everything we have related to our readers.

The whole, summed up, amounted to this: the city was taken; the constable and Coligny — that is to say, in the absence of the Duc de Guise, the two best captains of the realm — were prisoners, and it was yet unknown whether the victorious army would amuse itself with fighting before a few tumble-down towns or march directly on Paris.

But fighting before these tumble-down towns was just the kind of war that suited the timid and cautious temper of Philip II.

To march straight on Paris was a determination which harmonised well with the adventurous genius of Emmanuel Philibert.

Which of these two plans would the conquerors adopt?

Neither Dandelot nor Yvonnet could give an answer based on actual knowledge.

Dandelot was of opinion that the Duke of Savoy and the King of Spain would march on Paris immediately.

As to Yvonnet, such a question rose entirely above the level of his strategetic views; but as the king insisted on having his opinion, he concurred with Dandelot.

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The feeling of the majority, therefore, was that the conquerors would not waste their time, and consequently the conquered had no time to waste.

It was decided at the same moment that, after a few minutes' rest, the two messengers should set out, Dandelot in one direction, and Yvonnet in another, both charged with commissions in harmony with the military and social position filled by each respectively.

Dandelot would accompany Catherine de Médicis to Paris; Henri, who did not wish to quit the neighbourhood of the enemy, was sending the queen to make an appeal to the patriotism of the Parisian bourgeois.

Yvonnet would set out for Laon, would remit the king's letters to the Duc de Nevers, and would try, under some disguise or other, to ramble about the Spanish army and find out the intentions of the King of Spain and the plan he was likely to follow. There were many chances that the person charged with this perilous mission would be taken and hanged; but this idea which, from the memories it called up, would have made Yvonnet shudder during the night, had not the slightest effect on him during the day. Yvonnet accepted them: he was troubled with nerves only in the dark; but then, as we have seen, he was troubled frightfully.

M. Dandelot was authorised by the king to come to an understanding with the Cardinal de Lorraine, who had the management of the finances, as to the money which he and his brother needed in the precarious situation in which they were. As for Yvonnet, he received twenty gold crowns for the message he had just brought and the commission he was going to execute; moreover, the king gave him permission, as he did once before, to select in his stables the best horse he could find there.

At ten in the morning, — that is to say, after resting six hours, — the two messengers started for their respective destinations; but both turned their backs on each other at the gate, the one going to the east, the other to the west.

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We shall find again Yvonnet, the least important of our two characters, later on, or if we do not find him, as we are likely, at least, to hear news of him, let us follow the steps of M. Dandelot, which are also the steps of Queen Catherine de Médicis, who, in his company and under his protection, is travelling to Paris as fast as the heavy chariot drawn by four horses allows her to proceed to that capital.

In virtue of the axiom that danger viewed from afar is much more terrible than danger viewed close at hand, the terror in Paris was at first, perhaps, greater than in Compiègne.

Never, since the time when the English, from the plain of Saint-Denis, were able to catch a glimpse of the towers of Notre-Dame and the belfry of the Sainte-Chapelle, had such fear taken hold of the Parisians. It reached such a point the day after the report of the battle of Saint-Quentin came from the banks of the Somme to the shores of the Seine that, to see the number of waggons laden with furniture and the number of men and women on horseback, it would not have been unnatural to imagine that a third part of the inhabitants was about to change its abode, as it generally does at a particular season of the year. Now, this was more than a simple change of residence: it was a flight; the capital was about to overflow on the provinces.

It is true that gradually, when it was seen that the news was not becoming more alarming, thanks to that precious organisation with which the French nation is endowed beyond any other, and which enables it to laugh at everything, those remaining at Paris ridiculed those who left it; so that the fugitives slipped back without making any noise, and now, rendered more determined by the very mockery to which they had been exposed, appeared determined to hold out to the last extremity.

Such was the disposition in which Dandelot and Catherine, after crossing the barrier on the afternoon of the 28th of August, 1557, found the Parisians, to whom they brought

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news more dreadful than the battle of Saint-Laurent, — namely, the surrender of Saint-Quentin.

The effect produced by news sometimes depends on the fashion in which it is spread.

"My friends," said Dandelot, addressing the first group of bourgeois he met, "glory to the inhabitants of Saint-Quentin! They have held out for nearly a month in a place where the bravest would hardly have promised to hold out for eight days; by this resistance they have given time to M. de Nevers to collect an army, to which his Majesty King Henri II. is every day sending reinforcements, and now her Majesty Queen Catherine has come amongst you to appeal to your patriotism for France and your love for your kings."

At these words Queen Catherine passed her head through the carriage window and cried, —

"Yes, my friends, I come to announce to you, in the name of King Henri, that every city is ready to do its duty as Saint-Quentin has done. Illuminate your houses, then, as a token of the king's confidence in you, and of the love you bear him. This evening I will come to an understanding with your magistrates, M. Dandelot, and the Cardinal de Lorraine, as to the measures to be taken to repulse the enemy, who is already discouraged by the length of the siege before the first of our cities."

To announce in this way one of the most terrible pieces of information that the population of a capital has ever received, showed a wonderful knowledge of the multitude; and so it was Dandelot who had prepared both his own discourse and that of Catherine de Médicis.

The result was that the people who, if it had been simply said to them, "Saint-Quentin is taken and the Spaniards are marching on Paris!" would have disbanded and run howling in terror through the streets and crossways, "All is lost! let every one look out for himself!" began, on the contrary, to cry with all their might, "*Vive la reine Catherine! vive le roi Henri! vive le Cardinal de Lorraine!*

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Vive M. Dandelot!" and, pressing in crowds round the carriage of Queen Catherine, escorted them noisily and almost joyously from the Saint-Denis barrier to the palace of the Louvre.

On reaching the gate of the Louvre, Dandelot stood up again in his stirrups in order to command the innumerable crowd that thronged the square, the adjacent streets, and even the quays, and said in a loud voice, —

"My friends, her Majesty directs me to tell you that in an hour she will be at the Hôtel de Ville, to which place your magistrates are summoned; she will ride there on horseback in order to be nearer to you, and by your great numbers she will judge of your love. Do not forget the torches and illuminations."

The answer was an immense hurrah; and the queen was able, from that moment, to be certain that all these people, whose good-will she had won by a few words, were ready, like those of Saint-Quentin, to make every sacrifice, even that of their lives.

Catherine returned to the Louvre, accompanied by Dandelot; then the Cardinal de Lorraine was sent for at once, and ordered to convoke the magistrates of the city, the mayors and aldermen, the provosts of the merchants, and the syndics of the guilds, in the Hôtel de Ville at nine o'clock in the evening.

We have seen that Dandelot was a skilful manager; he had selected that hour, in order to produce a certain effect.

Most of those assembled at the gate of the Louvre, in order to be sure of forming a part of the royal procession, and also to prevent any one from taking the first places from them, resolved not to stir from the posts in which they were; a few, however, consented to act as messengers of the masses, and were sent to purchase torches.

In another direction, those popular heralds who, in all great events, take unto themselves the functions of public criers, went along the streets leading from the Louvre to the Hôtel de Ville, crying, —

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"Bourgeois of Paris, illuminate your windows; Queen Catherine de Médicis is about to pass, on her way to the Hôtel de Ville!"

And at this appeal, in which there was nothing compulsory, but which, on the contrary, left to the bourgeois full freedom of action, in every house situated on the route the queen was to take, every one began to bustle about, as in a vast hive, and to run in search of lamps, lanterns, and candles; and soon the windows testified to the general enthusiasm by the number of burning tapers and incandescent oils.

The criers, we say, went along the streets; for, with their instinctive intelligence, they saw clearly the queen would follow the line of the streets and not that of the quays; processions that follow the quays make a mistake in their itinerary, if they wish to evoke enthusiasm. Along the quays, enthusiasm follows them, but limping, like Justice; the river-side is necessarily dumb.

So, at the appointed hour, the queen, on horseback, between Dandelot and the Cardinal de Lorraine, accompanied by a poor suite of only a few persons, as was proper in the case of a queen appealing to her subjects under circumstances of dire calamity to royalty, — the queen, we repeat, proceeded along the Rue Saint-Honoré as far as the Château d'Eau, followed the Rue Saint-Honoré to the Rue des Fourreurs, continued her course to the Rue Jean-Pain-Mollet, and came out on the Grève by the Rue de l'Épine.

This march, whose incidents might have made a funeral march of it, became a veritable triumph, recalling the famous proclamations of *the country in danger*, put on the stage three centuries later by the artist Sergent; but in the latter case, everything had been prepared beforehand; for Catherine, everything was improvised.

She had time, between four and nine in the evening, to send to Saint-Germain for the young dauphin. The pale and sickly child was in harmony with the drama; he was the phantom of that Valois dynasty soon to be extinguished

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in the richest posterity that ever king possessed, with the exception of King Priam. Four brothers! It is true that three of those brothers were probably poisoned, and the fourth assassinated!

But during the evening we are attempting to describe, the mysterious future was still hidden in the blessed obscurity that veils it from the eyes of men. Each was occupied only with the present, and, in fact, the present had enough to occupy the minds even of those who were most eager for excitement and emotion.

Ten thousand persons accompanied the queen; a hundred thousand formed a lane through which she passed; two hundred thousand, perhaps, gazed on her from the windows. Those who accompanied, and those who formed the lane, carried torches, the glare from which gave a light, less brilliant, it is true, but far more fantastic, than that of the day; the people following the queen shook their torches, the people in the windows shook their handkerchiefs or threw flowers.

All cried, "*Vive le roi! vive la reine! vive le dauphin!*"

Then, from time to time, as if a breath of menace or of death was stirring this multitude, a dull, heavy murmur was heard, accompanied by the clashing of swords against each other, the flashing of brandished knives, and the discharge of arquebuses.

The cries, which rose no one could tell where, and which were lost in the distance, were, "Death to the English! death to the Spaniards!" And these cries sent a shudder through the body of the bravest, for it was felt that they were the sign of the inveterate hatred of an entire nation.

The queen, the dauphin, and the procession, which had started from the Louvre at nine, did not reach the Hôtel de Ville until half-past ten; during the whole passage, it was necessary to force a way through the crowd, for, on the present occasion, there was literally not a single guard, not a single solder on horse or foot to render the august riders any service in this direction. Any one, on the con-

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trary, could touch the horses, the raiment, and even the hands of the queen and the heir to the throne. The people were very eager to touch these horses, which threatened to trample on them, those rich robes, which contrasted singularly with their rags, those hands which were about to take from them their last sou; the contact made them cry with joy, when they ought to have groaned with sorrow!

It was amid these cries of joy and protests of devotion on the part of the entire population that the royal procession appeared on the Place la Grève, where the Hôtel de Ville — a jewel of the Renaissance spoiled by the order of Louis Philippe, like all the monuments on which he has laid his inartistic hand — had just been built.

All the municipal magistrates, the provosts, syndics, and heads of corporations were waiting on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville, or overflowing on the square, or standing under the gloomy vaults of the interior.

It took the queen, the dauphin, the Cardinal de Lorraine, and Dandelot a quarter of an hour to cross the square.

Never was Neronian circus illuminated more brilliantly, even on the nights when Christians, covered with sulphur and pitch, were burning: lights sparkled at every window; torches flared in every part of the square, along the quays, on the galleries, and even on the summits of Notre-Dame. The river seemed freighted with liquid fire!

The queen and the dauphin disappeared under the porch of the Hôtel de Ville only to reappear almost immediately on the balcony.

These words which Catherine had said or had not said were repeated with enthusiasm, "If the father dies in your defence, my good people of Paris, I bring you his son!"

And at the sight of that poor little son, who was to be François II. of piteous memory, the people applauded, shouted, and yelled. The queen remained on the balcony to foster the enthusiasm, letting the Cardinal de Lorraine and Dandelot manage matters with the magistrates of the city of Paris.

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She was right; they did manage them, and managed them well.

"They convinced," says the "History of Henri II.," by the Abbé de Lambert, "the magistrates and the chief bourgeois of the city of Paris of the love and affection of the king, ready to sacrifice his life in order to remove the dangers threatening them; they assured them that, however crushing the disaster which France had just suffered, this disaster would not be irreparable if his Majesty found in his faithful subjects the zeal which the latter had always shown for the glory and interests of the state; they added that the king, in order not to burden his people, had not hesitated to pledge his own domains, but that, this resource having been exhausted, his Majesty could only reckon on the voluntary aid which the love of his subjects promised to afford him, and that the more pressing the need, the greater should be the efforts of the French people to enable their king to oppose an equal force to that of the enemy."

This discourse produced its effect: the city of Paris voted, during the sitting, three hundred thousand livres for the first expenses of the war, inviting the principal cities of the kingdom to contribute in proportion to their resources.

As to the means of prompt defence, — and we know there was no time to be lost, — this is what Dandelot proposed: first, the recall of the Duc de Guise and his army; it was a measure adopted long since, as our readers are aware, and messengers had already been despatched with this object; secondly, a levy of thirty thousand French soldiers and twenty thousand foreigners; and lastly, the men-at-arms and the light horse were to be doubled.

To meet those gigantic expenses, at a moment when the public treasury was empty, and when the domains of the king *were pledged*, this is what Dandelot suggested: —

The clergy were to be requested to offer to the king a year's income, from all benefices without distinction, as a gift.

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The nobles, although exempt from taxation by their privileges, were to tax themselves according to their several means.

And Dandelot, giving the example, declared that he reserved for his own support and that of his brother only two thousand crowns, abandoning to the king the rest of his revenues as well as those of his brother.

In fine, the Cardinal de Lorraine, administrator of the finances, would draw up a plan for taxing the Third Estate according to its means. Poor Third Estate! they were equally careful not to tax it a year of its income, and not to give it the power to tax itself.

One part of these measures was voted with enthusiasm; the others were adjourned. It is hardly necessary to say that the measures adjourned were those making the clergy and nobles contribute their share of the expense of levying and supporting the troops needed.

However, it was decided immediately that fourteen thousand Swiss and eight thousand Germans should be enlisted, and that companies of all the young men capable of bearing arms should be formed in the provinces.

Indeed, the task accomplished on that evening was no slight one; at midnight everything was decided and finished.

Some minutes after, the queen descended the steps, holding the dauphin by the hand, who, though half asleep, graciously saluted the people with his little velvet cap.

At half-past one, Catherine returned to the Louvre, fully entitled to say, as did her fellow-countryman Mazarin a hundred years after, "They have shouted, they will pay!"

Oh people! people! still, it was this very weakness which revealed thy strength; it was prodigality of thy blood and gold which revealed thy riches. Those who were crushing thee confessed it when they asked thee to pour the alms of thy blood and gold into the velvet cap of the heir to the throne.

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X.

IN THE SPANISH CAMP.

We have seen what the Duc de Nevers was doing at Laon; we have seen what King Henri was doing at Compiègne; we have seen, in fine, what Queen Catherine, the dauphin, and the Cardinal de Lorraine were doing at Paris. We are going now to see what Philip II. and Emmanuel Philibert were doing in the Spanish camp, and how the time which was so well employed elsewhere was wasted there.

First, as we have said, the city of Saint-Quentin suffered all the consequences of its heroism, and was given up for five days to pillage. This city, which while alive saved France, continued to save it in its dying agony: the army which fell upon the poor dead city with such fury forgot that the rest of France was living, and, aroused by this spectacle, was organising a desperate defence.

We shall, then, pass over these five days, — days of conflagration, mourning, and desolation, — it being our intention not to pause until we reach the 1st of September; and, as in a preceding chapter we have told what aspect the city presented, we shall now tell, with the same exactness, what aspect the camp presented.

Since morning, everything had very nearly returned to its usual regularity. Each one counted his prisoners, examined his booty, took his inventory, and laughed over what he had gained, or smiled over what he had lost.

At eleven in the forenoon, a council was to be held under the tent of the King of Spain.

This tent was placed at the extremity of the camp; we have explained why: — the music of the French bullets being particularly disagreeable to the ears of Philip II.

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We will begin with the important personages, and see what was passing under this tent.

The king was holding an open letter which a courier seated on a stone bench at the door of the royal tent had just brought him; — this courier was covered with dust; a valet of the King of Spain was filling his glass, a common tavern one, with a golden wine whose color betrayed its southern origin.

The letter, which was adorned with a red wax seal, with arms surmounted by a mitre, appeared to have a singular interest for Philip II.

At the moment when, for the third or fourth time, he had read the important missive, the gallop of a horse, suddenly arrested at the door of his tent, made him raise his head, and, under the winking lids, the sombre eye seemed to be inquiring who was the person apparently so anxious to find himself in his presence.

Scarcely a few seconds had elapsed, when the tapestry at the entrance to the tent was raised, and one of those servitors who carried into the midst of the camp the etiquette of the palaces of Burgos and Valladolid announced: —

"His Excellency Don Luis de Vargas, secretary of my lord the Duke of Alba."

Philip uttered a cry of joy; then, as if he was ashamed of this expression of emotion, he became at once silent, and in a voice in which it was impossible to distinguish any feeling, pleasant or unpleasant, he said: —

"Let Don Luis de Vargas enter."

Don Luis entered.

The messenger was covered with sweat and dust; the paleness of his face was indicative of a long journey, and the foam which overspread his horse and moistened the inner side of his boots, showed the speed he had made to reach the king. And yet, when he was announced, he remained standing, with his hat in his hand, ten paces from King Philip, waiting for a word to be addressed to him before he told his news.

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This submission to the law of etiquette — the first of all laws in Spain — appeared to satisfy the king, and, with a smile faint as a sunbeam shining through a grayish autumn cloud, he said: —

"God be with you, Don Luis de Vargas! What news from Italy?"

"Good and bad, sire, at the same time!" replied Don Luis. "We are masters of the situation in Italy; but the Duc de Guise is returning to France immediately with a part of the French army."

"It is the Duke of Alba who has sent you with this intelligence, is it not, Don Luis?"

"Yes, sire; and he ordered me to take the shortest route and make all haste, in order that I might be in France at least a dozen days before M. de Guise. Consequently, I embarked in a galley at Ostia, landed at Genoa, made my way through Switzerland, Strasbourg, Metz, and Mézières, and happily accomplished this journey in a fortnight, because I am sure it will take double that time for the Duc de Guise to reach Paris."

"Indeed, you have been very diligent, Don Luis, and I confess I do not see how you could have come in less time. But have you no private letter from the Duke of Alba for me?"

"He has not ventured, may it please your Majesty, to confide anything to me in writing, from a fear that I might be taken; but he has ordered me to repeat these words to you: 'Let his Majesty remember how King Tarquin dealt with the poppies that grew too high in his garden; nothing should grow too high in the garden of kings, not even princes.' Your Majesty, he added, would understand perfectly the significance of these words, and the fortune to which he alludes."

"Yes," murmured the King of Spain, "yes, there I recognise the prudence of my faithful Alvarez. Don Luis, I understand, and am grateful. As for you, go and rest, and give orders yourself to my people to do all that is necessary for you."

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Don Luis bowed, retired, and the tapestry fell behind him.

Let us leave Philip II. to meditate on the episcopal letter and on the verbal message of the Duke of Alba, and let us pass under another tent not farther from this one than a musket-shot would carry.

It is the tent of Emmanuel Philibert. Emmanuel Philibert is bending over a camp bed on which a wounded man is lying. A physician is taking off the things needed for the cure of a wound which seems to be a contusion on the left breast, and yet, to judge by the paleness of the patient, is of a much graver character.

Nevertheless, after an inspection of the frightful ecchymosis, which looked as if it might have been produced by a rock hurled from an ancient catapult, the countenance of the physician cleared up.

The wounded man is our old friend Scianca-Ferro, whom we have not been able to accompany on the day of the great assault already described by us. We now find the brave squire under the tent of the Duke of Savoy, on that bed of pain which the soldier is taught to believe is a bed of glory.

"Well?" asked Emmanuel Philibert, anxiously.

"He is better, much better," replied the doctor; "the wounded man is now out of danger—"

"I told you so, Emmanuel," interrupted Scianca-Ferro, in a voice he tried to render firm, but only succeeded in rendering strident. "In truth, you humiliate me in treating me as you would treat an old woman, and all on account of an insignificant contusion!"

"An insignificant contusion that has broken one rib, driven in two others, and made you spit blood every time you breathed for the last six days!"

"Yes, it's pretty safe to say that the implement was used with effect. Hand me over the machine in question, Emmanuel."

Emmanuel searched for the *machine in question*, and

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picked up, in a corner of the tent, an object which was in fact a real machine, and a machine of war at that.

Vigorous as he was, the prince had great difficulty in raising it; but at last he laid it on the bed of Scianca-Ferro.

It was a twelve-pounder fitted to an iron bar; the whole might weigh from twenty-five to thirty pounds.

"*Corpo di Bacco!*" cried Scianca-Ferro, gaily, "a charming plaything that, you must admit, Emmanuel! And what has been done with the fellow who played with it?"

"No harm has been done to him, as you directed. He has been asked to pledge his word not to escape. He has done so, and he is likely to be as usual some paces from the tent, sighing and weeping, with his forehead in his hands."

"Ah! yes, poor devil! I cleaved the head of his brother down to the ears, — a worthy German who swore hard, but struck harder. By my faith! if there had been ten like these two rascals at every breach, the struggle would have resembled that famous war of the Titans you told me of when you used to try to dig into my skull that abominable Greek which I never could abide, and you would have found Saint-Quentin as hard to scale as they did Pelion and Ossa!"

And then, listening for a moment: —

"Eh! *mordieu!* Emmanuel, some one is trying to pick a quarrel with my honest Teuton, — I hear his voice. It must be a devilishly serious affair, for I have been told that he has not opened his mouth for the last five days."

In fact, the noise of a quarrel reached the ears of the wounded man and those who surrounded him, and this noise had a treble accompaniment of oaths in Spanish, Picard, and German.

Emmanuel left Scianca-Ferro to the care of the doctors, and, to please the wounded man, went to the door of the tent and made inquiries as to the cause of this quarrel, which had now degenerated into a regular engagement.

At the moment when, like unto the Neptune of Virgil,

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Emmanuel Philibert uttered the *quos ego* that was to calm the angry waves, the aspect of the field of battle was as follows.

In the first place, — we ask pardon of our readers, but, as say the Picard peasants, whose acquaintance we are about to form, — *saving the respect we owe them*, the principal hero of the skirmish was an ass.

A magnificent ass, it is true, loaded with cabbage, carrots, and lettuce, kicking and braying in wise it was wondrous to see and hear, and exerting the remainder of his energies in scattering the garden produce around him.

After the ass, the most important actor was, beyond contradiction, our friend Heinrich Scharfenstein, striking right and left with a tent pole which he had uprooted, and by the aid of which he had already knocked over seven or eight Flemish soldiers. A veil of profound melancholy was spread over his countenance; but, as we see, this melancholy in no way impaired the vigour of his arm.

After Heinrich, came a young and beautiful peasant girl, fresh and vigorous, who was giving it hot and heavy to a Spanish soldier, he having, in all probability, taken liberties by which her modesty was shocked.

Next, the probable proprietor of the ass, who was picking up the lettuce, carrots, and cabbage, all the while grumbling, for the soldiers around him were giving evidence of a great fondness for these dainties.

The presence of Emmanuel Philibert had, as we have seen, the effect of the head of Medusa on all the participants: the soldiers dropped the cabbage, lettuce, and carrots they had already appropriated; the fair girl released the Spanish soldier, who fled with his moustache half torn out by the roots and a bloody nose; the ass stopped kicking and braying. Heinrich Scharfenstein alone gave two or three blows with his pole, which knocked down two or three men; he was like some machine launched with too much force to be arrested at a mere signal.

"What is the matter?" asked Emmanuel Philibert,

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"and why are these brave men maltreated in such a fashion?"

"Ah! it 's you, monseigneur; that 's just what I 'm going to tell you," said the peasant in the Picard *patois*, approaching the prince, holding as much cabbage, carrots, and lettuce in his arms as he could manage, and chewing the brim of his hat between his teeth, as if to render his language more intelligible.

"The deuce!" murmured Emmanuel; "I don't find it at all easy to comprehend what you say, my friend! I speak Italian like a native, Spanish passably, French the same, and a little German; but the Picard *patois* not at all."

"But I can tell you the fine way they have behaved to my ass, — and my daughter, too!"

"My friends," said Emmanuel Philibert, "is there any one among you who can translate into French, Spanish, Italian, or German the complaints of this man?"

"Into French, is it? — Why, my daughter Yvonnette has been at a boarding-school in Saint-Quentin, and can patter you French as well as our curé. Oh! now, is n't that fine? Speak, Yvonnette, speak!"

The young girl advanced timidly, trying to blush. "Monseigneur," said she, "excuse my father; but he belongs to the village of Pavy, where they speak only *patois*, and — you understand?"

"Yes," said Emmanuel, smiling, "I understand that I don't understand."

"In fact," grumbled the peasant, "they must be sillier than the dogs not to understand Picard!"

"Hush! father!" said the young girl.

Then, turning to the prince, —

"This is what happened, monseigneur. Yesterday we heard in our village that all the fields round about had been laid waste by the great battles fought on them, and that, on account of the fortress of Le Catelet, which still holds out for King Henri, preventing convoys reaching the camp from Cambray, fresh provisions, and particularly

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vegetables, are absent from the table even of the king and from yours, monseigneur."

"Capital!" cried Emmanuel Philibert; "that 's what I call speaking to the purpose! You are quite right, my fair child. Although we do not lack provisions, we have not the kind we want; vegetables, especially, are rare with us."

"Yes," returned the peasant, who apparently did not like to give up all share in the conversation; "as I was saying yesterday to our lass, 'Wench —'"

"My friend," interrupted Emmanuel, "supposing you let your daughter do the talking: we shall both be the gainers."

"Good! speak, lass, speak!"

"So, yesterday, my father said to himself: 'What if I were to take my donkey, and load him with cabbage, lettuce, and carrots, and went to the camp with them, perhaps the King of Spain and the Duke of Savoy would not be sorry to have some fresh herbs to eat.'"

"I believe you, *pardie!* Our cow, and she 's a beast not like any other, likes to have fresh herbs to eat, and why should n't a king and prince like to have the same?"

"If you were to speak for a long time, my friend," said Emmanuel, smiling, "I think I should understand you at the finish; but, if it is all the same to you, I prefer to converse with your daughter. Go on, child, go on!"

"Then, this morning, at daybreak," resumed the young girl, "we descended to the garden, cut our finest and freshest vegetables, loaded our donkey with them, and came here. Did we do wrong, monseigneur?"

"On the contrary, my child, your idea was a very good one."

"Faith! we thought so, monseigneur. But we were hardly at the camp when your soldiers threw themselves on our poor ass. It was all very well for father to say, 'They are for the King of Spain! they are for the Duke of Savoy!' they paid no attention. Then, we began to cry and our ass began to bray; but in spite of Cadet's cries

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and our cries, we should have surely been plundered — to say nothing of what might have happened to me — if that brave man sitting yonder had not come to our rescue, and did the work you see."

"Yes, a rough piece of work!" said Emmanuel, shaking his head; "two men dead and four or five wounded for a few miserable vegetables! But no matter, his intention was good. Besides, he is under the protection of a friend of mine; so all is well."

"Then, monseigneur, we sha'n't meet with any misfortune on account of coming to the camp?" timidly asked the girl who was called Yvonnette by her father.

"Quite the contrary, my fair maid."

"Because we are very tired, monseigneur," continued the young girl, "having travelled five leagues to reach the camp, and we should rather not set out on our return until the heat of the day has passed."

"You shall go when you like," said the prince; "and as the good intention ought to be as well rewarded as the deed, in fact better than the deed, when possible, here are three crowns to make up for the trouble you had with your donkey."

Then, turning to some of his people whom curiosity had attracted thither, —

"Gaetano," he said, "have these provisions placed in the cantine of the King of Spain, then give the best you have in the way of eating and drinking to these worthy people, and also see that nobody insults them."

When the hour for the meeting to be held under the tent of the King of Spain approached, and the leaders of the army were coming thither from all points of the camp, Emmanuel Philibert entered his to see whether the wound of Scianca-Ferro was properly attended to, and — as this preoccupation engrossed his mind, he did not perceive the sarcastic smile exchanged between the peasant and his daughter and an ill-favoured rascal who was advancing, all the time polishing furiously the armlets of M. de Montmorency's cuirass.

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XI.

IN WHICH YVONNET GATHERS ALL THE INFORMATION HE WANTS.

THE pretext adopted by the Picard peasant and his daughter in order to enter the Spanish camp, could not be better chosen, that is, supposing it was a pretext. We have seen how gratified was Emmanuel Philibert by the kindly intention of the kitchen gardener to bring vegetables for his own table and that of the King of Spain.

In fact, if we are to believe Mergey, a gentleman of M. de la Rochefoucauld, made prisoner at the battle of Saint-Quentin and brought to the Spanish camp the same evening, victuals were not abundant on the table of the Duke of Savoy. Mergey was at first reduced to water, which went against his nature, and made him very sad; it is true his master, Comte de la Rochefoucauld, was not better treated. "All the provisions they had for seven at table," says the unhappy man, in despair at being reduced to water, "was a morsel of beef about the size of your fist, and this they put in a pot of water without either salt, or lard, or herbs; then, when we were all at table, little tin saucers were filled with the said soup; then the little bit of meat was divided into as many slices as there were men at table, and there was very little bread with it." It will not be surprising, therefore, when the officers were forced to adopt such an abstemious diet, to find the soldiers, who were much worse off, throw themselves on the ass and its load of provisions, which they would doubtless have appropriated in spite of the efforts of Heinrich Scharfenstein, the peasant, and his daughter, if Emmanuel Philibert,

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attracted by the noise, had not left his tent, and come as a pacifier to restore order.

Although placed under the special protection of Gaetano, the peasant and his daughter especially appeared to have all the difficulty in the world in recovering from the alarm they had just undergone. As for the donkey, his temper appeared to be less impressionable, and, once restored to liberty, he began joyously to devote his attention to the vegetables scattered all over the ground in the heat of the combat.

It was, then, only when they saw Emmanuel Philibert leave his tent and disappear in the direction of that of the king, that they seemed to regain a little self-control, — although, after what had just passed, and seeing that the prince had been their protector, they might reasonably be expected to prefer his presence to his absence; but nobody took any notice of this anomaly except the furbisher of the constable's cuirass, who appeared to pay as much attention to the departure of the prince as the peasant and his daughter did.

As to Heinrich Scharfenstein, he was sitting on the same bench he had left to come to the aid of the two victims of the brutality of the Spanish soldiers, and had sunk again into the profound sadness that seemed to be devouring him.

Some curious persons still surrounded the peasant and his daughter, and evidently were embarrassing them by their presence, when Gaetano came to their relief and invited them to enter, and their donkey with them, into a sort of park surrounded by palisades behind the tent of the Duke of Savoy.

His object was to unload the ass of its precious burden, and to seek the provisions which Emmanuel, notwithstanding the general scarcity, had ordered to be placed at the disposal of the peasant and his daughter.

As soon as the waggon was unloaded, they received a loaf, a piece of cold meat, and a pitcher of wine. It was, as can

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be seen, more than was granted to Comte de la Rochefoucauld and the gentlemen prisoners with him.

So — doubtless not to expose themselves to fresh outrages from the greed of the soldiers — the peasant and his daughter left the park with extreme caution, looking to right and to left in order to see if the curiosity seekers were gone, and if those who had molested them were out of the way.

There was nobody on the field of battle, from which the dead and wounded had been carried off in presence of Emmanuel Philibert, except the furbisher of the constable, who was furbishing his armlet with more fury than ever, and Heinrich Scharfenstein, who had not stirred during the absence of the peasant and his daughter.

Yvonnette went to a little isolated shed, while, in recognition of the service done him by the giant, her father invited Heinrich Scharfenstein to do them the honour of partaking with them the lunch they owed to the munificence of the Duke of Savoy; but Heinrich merely shook his head, and murmured with a sigh: —

"Since Franz died, I have no appetite!"

The peasant regarded Heinrich sadly, and, after exchanging a look with the furbisher, he joined his daughter, who had turned an old box into a table, and was awaiting the author of her days seated on a bundle of straw.

Hardly had they begun their repast when a shadow suddenly fell on the improvised table; it was that of the indefatigable furbisher.

"Plague take it!" he said; "what luxury! I have a mind to go and invite M. le Connétable to share it with us."

"Ah! by my faith, no!" said the peasant in excellent French; "he would eat the whole of our little pittance himself alone?"

"Without counting," said the young peasant girl, "that an honest woman runs great risk in the company of the old campaigner; at least, so I am told."

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"Yes; and, of course, you are so much afraid of campaigners, young or old! *Mordieu!* what a knock-down you gave the Spanish soldier who tried to kiss you! I suspected who you were at the beginning, but it was only when you cuffed him in that remarkable style that I recognised you. That 's all very fine, but what object have you both, in the devil's name, in risking being hanged as spies by coming into the camp of these ragamuffins of Spaniards?"

"In the first place, to get some news about you, my dear Pilletrousse, and about your companions," said the young girl.

"You are too good, Mademoiselle Yvonnette, and if you will be kind enough to fill this third glass, which you seem to have intended for me, we shall drink, first to the health of your servant, which, as you see, is by no means bad, then to that of the rest of our companions, who unfortunately are by no means so well off as we are."

"And I," said Yvonnet, — for doubtless our readers have recognised the adventurer, in spite of his disguise and the syllable to his name, — "I am going to tell you the object which has brought me here; and you must do your best to help me to fulfil my mission."

While generously filling the wine-glass of Pilletrousse to the brim, Yvonnet waited anxiously for the news asked for.

"Ah!" said Pilletrousse, clacking his tongue in that fashion which, among intelligent drinkers is always a sort of funeral oration over the glass of wine they have drunk, especially when the wine is good; "ah! it warms one's heart to find an old friend again!"

"Are you speaking of the wine or of me?" asked Yvonnet.

"Of both. But, to return to our companions, Maldent here can give you all the information you desire about Lactance, Procope, and himself; for," added Pilletrousse, "I have heard that you were all buried alive together."

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"Yes," returned Maldent; "and I must add, to my great regret, that we have stayed in the sepulchre two days longer than our Lord Jesus Christ."

"But you have left it with glory, that is the main point. Excellent Jacobins! By the way, how did they feed you while you were dead?"

"With their best, I must render them that justice; and never before were the dead, even in the case of the husband of the matron of Ephesus, the objects of such assiduous care."

"And did the Spaniards never pay you a visit in your cave?"

"We heard the echo of their steps two or three times on the stairs; but, on seeing that long file of sepulchres, they retired, and I believe, if we had taken it into our heads to raise the lids, they would have been more frightened than we were."

"Good! that accounts for three, and even for four, since I see you on your legs, and polishing the armour of the constable."

"You guess, don't you? Thanks to my knowledge of the Spanish language, I passed for a friend of the conquerors; then I slipped into the tent of M. de Montmorency, resumed my task, which had been interrupted a fortnight before, and as no one had troubled himself about my departure, no one troubled himself about my return."

"But what about Franz and Malemort?"

"Look at poor Heinrich weeping, and that will tell you what has become of Franz."

"How the devil could such a giant have been killed by one man?" asked Yvonnet, with a deep sigh; for our readers cannot have forgotten the tender friendship that united the two Germans to the youngest of the adventurers.

"And so," replied Pilletrousse, "it was not by a man he was killed, but by an incarnate demon named Brise-Fer, squire, friend, and foster-brother of the Duke of Savoy. The uncle and nephew were about twenty paces from each

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other, defending the eleventh breach, I believe. This Brise-Fer, otherwise Scianca-Ferro, attacked the nephew; poor Franz had already slain twenty men; he was a little tired, and was too late to parry; the sword cleft his helmet and skull down to the eyes! and, it must be said in his praise, his skull was so thick that this diabolical Scianca-Ferro never could pull his sword out of the wound. It was while he was engaged in the effort to do so, that Heinrich perceived what was passing, and, not being able to help his nephew in time, he hurled his mace at the enemy with all his might instead; the mace went straight to its mark, drove in the cuirass, the flesh, and it appears even the ribs. But it was too late; Franz fell on one side, and Bras de Fer on the other; only Franz fell without uttering a word, while Bras de Fer had time to say when falling: 'Let no harm be done to the man who has flung his club against my ribs. If I recover, I wish to cultivate the acquaintance of that worthy catapult.' And he fainted; but his wish was sacred. Heinrich Scharfenstein was taken alive; this was not difficult, for when he saw his nephew fall, he went straight to him, sat down on the breach, drew the sword from the skull and placed the head on his knees, without paying any further attention to what was happening around him. Now, as he and his nephew were the last to hold out, when the nephew was dead and the uncle was seated the combat ceased; he was surrounded, summoned to surrender, and at the same time told that no harm would be done him. 'Shall I be separated from the body of my child?' he asked. He was told no. 'Well, then, I surrender; do with me what you like.' And in fact he surrendered, took the body of Franz in his arms, followed those who were conducting him to the tent of the Duke of Savoy, kept the body a day and a night, dug his grave on the border of the river, buried him, and, faithful to his word not to escape, returned to take his seat on the bench where you found him. But it is said that since the death of Franz he has neither eaten nor drunk."

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"Poor Heinrich!" murmured Yvonnet; while Maldent, either because he had a less feeling heart, or did not care to let the conversation assume a mournful tone, asked: —

"And about Malemort? I hope that this time he has ended in a manner worthy of himself!"

"Well," returned Pilletrousse, "you are mistaken; Malemort received two fresh wounds, which with the old ones makes up just twenty-six, and, as he was thought to be dead, he was thrown into the river. But it would seem the freshness of the water revived him; for, when I was watering the horse of M. le Connétable, I heard a poor devil groaning; I approached, and recognised Malemort."

"Who was only waiting for a friend in order to expire in his arms?"

"Not at all! Who was waiting for a shoulder to lean on and climb back to life, as the poet Fracasso might have said, the only one of us I cannot tell you anything about."

"Well," said Yvonnet with a shudder, "he has had the kindness to give me news of himself in person."

And Yvonnet related, not without turning pale, although it was full daylight, what had happened to him on the night of the 27th and 28th of August.

He was at the end of his narrative, when a great commotion announced that the conference which had been held under the king's tent was over.

All the leaders of the Spanish, Flemish, and English armies were in fact proceeding to their respective quarters, calling abruptly, like men in a hurry to transmit the orders they have received to such of the soldiers of their army or such of their attendants as they met on their way; — all appeared to be in a very bad temper.

After a few moments, Emmanuel Philibert also was visible; like the others, he came out of the tent of the king, but he seemed to be in a still worse temper than they.

"Gaetano," he cried to his major-domo, as soon as he perceived him, "order the men to strike their tents; let the baggage be loaded and the horses saddled."

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This injunction clearly pointed in the direction of a departure, but left our adventurers in the vaguest uncertainty as to the route which was to be followed. According to all probability, Paris was threatened, but by what road did the enemy intend to march on Paris? Was it by Ham, Noyon, and Picardy, following the river Somme, or by Laon, Soissons, and the Isle-de-France, or by Châlons and Champagne? These three roads, we know, — with the exception of some troops at Laon commanded by the Duc de Nevers, and the fortresses of Ham and La Fère, which could be easily turned, — offered no obstacle to the Spanish army.

To know which of these routes the Spanish army would follow was the important point for Yvonnet.

Pilletrousse understood the urgency of the situation; he seized the pitcher of wine, emptied nearly two-thirds of it, then drank like one who had no time to lose, and started for the tent of the constable, in hopes he might learn something.

The two false peasants, under pretence of drawing their donkey away from the hubbub, where he was in danger of being taken for one of the beasts of burden of the Duke of Savoy's army, returned to the yard and waited — Maldent held Cadet by the bridle, and Yvonnet was seated astride on the pack-saddle, with a foot in each basket — until some indiscretion on the part of the servants might tell them what they wanted to learn.

They had not long to wait.

Gaetano rushed out quite scared to transmit to the muleteers, grooms, and hostlers the orders he had received; then, perceiving the peasant and his daughter, —

"Ah! you are still there, good folks, are you?" he said.

"Yes," replied Yvonnette, the only one of the two who was supposed to understand French; "my father is waiting to learn where he is to bring his vegetables in future."

"Oh! it seems he finds my master a good customer! Well, let him come to Le Catelet, which we are going to besiege."

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"Thanks, good sir," replied the peasant; "it will be a long road to travel; but no matter, we 'll go all the same to Le Catelet."

"To Le Catelet!" repeated Yvonnette, in a whisper. "*Mordieu!* they are turning their backs on Paris! Precious tidings I have to announce to King Henri II.!"

Five minutes later, the two adventurers reached, by the help of the causeway, the left bank of the Somme; an hour after, Yvonnet flung off his woman's gown, and in the garb with which we are already acquainted galloped along the La Fère highway.

At three in the afternoon, he entered the château of Compiègne, waving his cap and shouting: —

"Good news! rich news! Paris is saved!"

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XII.

GOD PROTECTS FRANCE.

In fact, the moment that Philip II. and Emmanuel Philibert did not march immediately on Paris, France was saved.

How was it that such a fault had been committed? It was the consequence of the irresolute and suspicious character of the King of Spain, or rather the effect of the special favour which, in extreme circumstances, God always shows France.

Our readers will recall the letter King Philip was holding in his hand at the time Don Luis de Vargas, secretary of the Duke of Alba, arrived from Rome. This letter was from the Bishop of Arras, one of those counsellors in whom Philip, the least trustful of men, had most trust.

Philip II. had sent a courier to consult him as to what had better be done after the battle of Saint-Laurent, and also after the capture of Saint-Quentin, if Saint-Quentin, as seemed probable, fell into the hands of the Spaniards. The bishop, as was naturally to be expected, replied as a churchman, and not as a soldier.

Cardinal Granvelle, in the collection of his state papers, has preserved this letter for us, — a letter that was to have such weight in the scale of the destinies of France.

We shall content ourselves with giving one passage. It is that which Philip was reading when Don Luis de Vargas entered.

"It would not be prudent to make any further attempts against the French during the remainder of the year, both the season and the nature of the country being obstacles in the way: to do so would be

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to compromise the success already obtained, and the reputation of the Spanish arms. The best thing to do is to distress the enemy by burning and ravaging his territory beyond the Somme."

It was, therefore, the opinion of the Bishop of Arras, that, in spite of the victory of Saint-Laurent and the capture of Saint-Quentin, the King of Spain ought not to venture to penetrate farther into the heart of France.

Though the advice of the Duke of Alba was more obscure in the eyes of others, it was not for that reason less clear in the eyes of Philip II.: —

"Sire, remember how Tarquin struck down with his staff the highest poppies in his garden!"

Such was the advice of that captain-minister whose sombre genius was in such harmony with the terrible temper of the successor of Charles V. that the wrath of Heaven seems to have created Philip II. for the Duke of Alba, and the Duke of Alba for Philip II. Now, was not the poppy whose head was growing so high Emmanuel Philibert?

It is true that, if he grew great so rapidly, it was because he throve on battle-fields, and glory watered his fortune; but the greater the prestige attached to the name of the Duke of Savoy, the more this prestige was to be dreaded.

If, after Saint-Laurent won, Saint-Quentin taken, they marched on Paris, and Paris fell into the hands of Emmanuel Philibert, what reward would be worthy of such a service? Would it be enough to restore to the son of Duke Charles the states that had been wrested from him? Moreover, was it for the interest of Philip II., who held a portion of them, that they should be restored? Once he was in possession of Piedmont, who could be sure that he would not take Milan, and, after Milan, the kingdom of Naples? — these two possessions of the Spanish crown in Italy, which, on account of the double claim France had to them, cost so much blood to Louis XII. and François I., without either having been able, we do not say to take, but to keep them. How did it come that neither Louis XII. nor François I. had been able to keep them, though

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the one had taken Naples and the other Milan? It was because neither had any base of supplies in Italy; it was because they were forced to get all their succours from the other side of the Alps. But would this be so in the case of a prince who dwelt on the eastern slopes of the Alps and spoke the language of Naples and Milan? Might not this man, instead of being simply a conqueror in Italy, be her liberator?

This was the gigantic phantom, which, like the giant of the Cape of Storms, arose between Saint-Quentin and Paris.

Consequently, in opposition to the general advice, and particularly in opposition to the advice of Emmanuel Philibert, which was to march directly on the capital without giving Henri II. time to breathe, Philip declared that the victorious army should not take another step forward, and must be satisfied during this campaign with besieging Le Catelet, Ham, and Chauny, while the walls of Saint-Quentin were to be raised and that city made the bulwark of the conquests from the French army.

This was the news — not in all its details, but in all its probabilities — which Yvonnet brought to Henri II., and which made him shout so confidently, "Paris is saved!"

On receiving these tidings, which however Henri could scarcely believe, new orders crossed each other in every sense, from Compiègne to Laon, from Laon to Paris, and from Paris to the Alps.

An ordinance was issued that all soldiers, and gentlemen bearing arms or capable of bearing arms should repair to Laon and place themselves under the authority of the Duc de Nevers, Lieutenant-General of the King, — an ordinance which seemed not so much a hardship to the persons concerned as an attack on the privileges of the nobility.

Dandelot was ordered to start for the little Cantons of Switzerland and enlist four thousand men whom it had been decided to enroll.

Two German colonels, Rockrod and Reiffenberg, led through Alsace and Lorraine four thousand men levied by them on the banks of the Rhine.

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It was known that eight thousand men of the army of Italy were returning across the Alps by forced marches.

At the same time,— as if to reassure Henri, who, although the enemy were close to Noyon, did not leave Compiègne, — it was learned that serious dissensions had broken out between the English and Spaniards at the siege of Le Catelet.

The English were exasperated by the haughty demeanour of the Spaniards, who claimed all the honour of the battle of Saint-Laurent and all the success of the siege of Saint-Quentin, and were insisting on withdrawing. This they did on the very day permission was granted them; for Philip II., in his partiality for his countrymen, always took their part, and had allowed the English to retire. Eight days afterwards, the Germans mutinied, angered because Philip II. and Emmanuel Philibert had alone profited by the ransoms of the prisoners of Saint-Quentin. As a result of this dispute, three thousand Germans deserted the Spanish army, and, being promptly hired by the Duc de Nevers, passed from the service of the King of Spain to the service of the King of France.

The rendezvous of all these troops was the city of Compiègne, which M. de Nevers had carefully fortified, and under whose cannon he planned a camp capable of holding a hundred thousand men.

In fine, during the last days of the month of September, a sudden rumour ran through Paris that Duc François de Guise had arrived from Italy.

The next day, a magnificent cavalcade led by the duke himself, with the Cardinal de Lorraine on his right and M. de Nemours on his left, and behind him two hundred gentlemen wearing his colours, issued from the Hôtel de Guise, proceeded to the boulevards, and, returning by the quays and the Hôtel de Ville, aroused the Parisians to the highest pitch of enthusiasm, who believed that, now their beloved duke was returned, they had nothing more to fear.

The same evening, proclamation was made by sound of

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trumpet at all the cross-ways of the city that Duc François de Guise was appointed Lieutenant-General of the realm.

Perhaps, in acting as he did, Henri II. was forgetful of the advice of his father on his death-bed to make it the chief object of his reign not to let the House of Guise rise too high; but the situation was extreme, and this wise recommendation was neglected.

On the next day, which was the 29th of September, the duke set out for Compiègne, and at once began to fulfil the duties of his office by reviewing the troops gathered as if by miracle in the intrenched camp.

On the 10th of August preceding, there were not in the whole kingdom ten thousand men capable of bearing arms, including the garrisons of the cities; and these same men were so discouraged that, at the first cannon-shot, those of them in the open country were ready to fly, and those in the cities were ready to surrender; on the 30th of September, Duc François reviewed an army of nearly fifty thousand men; that is to say, an army larger by a third than the army of the King of Spain, since his rupture with the English and Germans. It was also a splendid army, full of enthusiasm, and begged to be led at once against the enemy.

Happy is that land in which it is only necessary to strike the earth, either in the name of the monarchy or the nation, for armed men immediately to spring up.

At last, it was learned on the 26th of October that King Philip, followed by the Duke of Savoy and all his court, had left Cambray and returned to Brussels, regarding the campaign as finished.

Then, every one might not only cry, as Yvonnet had done on entering the courtyard of Compiègne, "Glorious news! Paris is saved!" but also, "Glorious news! France is saved!"

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FOURTH PART.

I.

A RECOLLECTION AND A PROMISE.

A YEAR had elapsed since King Philip II., by withdrawing from Cambray to Brussels and declaring the campaign of 1557 terminated, made twenty-five millions of men exclaim joyfully, "France is saved!"

We have said what miserable considerations had, in all probability, prevented him from pursuing his conquests; we shall not be long in finding at the court of King Henri II. a fatal parallel to the selfish resolution which, as we have seen, was a source of such affliction to Emmanuel Philibert.

The vexation of the Duke of Savoy, on seeing himself brought to a halt on the right bank of the Somme, was the more grievous because he suspected the cause of the strange decision, — a cause as insoluble in the eyes of modern historians as that of the famous halt of Hannibal at Capua was to ancient historians.

Moreover, there were other great events, which it is our duty to make known to our readers, accomplished the same year.

The most important of these events was, beyond all contradiction, the capture of Calais by the Duc de Guise. After that fatal battle of Crécy, which brought France as near destruction as that of Saint-Quentin had lately done, Edward III. attacked Calais by land and sea: by sea with

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a fleet of eighty sail, and by land with an army of thirty thousand men. Although defended by a very small garrison, which, however, was commanded by Jean de Vienne, one of the bravest captains of the time, Calais did not surrender until after a siege of a year, and until the inhabitants had eaten the last morsel of leather to be found in the city.

Ever since that time, — that is to say, for two hundred and ten years, — the English, as they do to-day with regard to Gibraltar, devoted all their energies to the task of rendering Calais impregnable; and so strong was their belief that they had succeeded that they had caused the following inscription to be engraved above the principal gate: —

"Besieged for full three hundred and eighty days,
The Valois lost Calais, by England taken.
When lead that swims like cork astounds your gaze,
Then England's sway o'er Calais will be shaken."

Now this city, which the English had only taken after a siege of three hundred and eighty days from Philip of Valois, and which the successors of the victor of Cassel and vanquished of Crécy could only recover when lead swam on the water like a piece of cork, the Duc de Guise had carried in eight days, and that not by a regular siege, but by a sort of surprise.

After Calais, the Duc de Guise recovered Guines and Ham, while the Duc de Nevers retook Herbeumont; and in these four places the English had left three hundred brass cannon and two hundred and ninety of iron.

Perhaps our readers, when we speak of all those heroes who were doing their best to repair the losses of the preceding year, are rather surprised at not hearing us pronounce, we do not say the names of the constable and Coligny, — we know they were prisoners, — but the name of Dandelot, a name not less illustrious, and certainly not less French.

The name of Dandelot was, in fact, the only name that

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could presume to compete with that of the Duc de Guise, in view of the genius and courage of its bearer.

Such was the feeling of the Cardinal de Lorraine, entirely absorbed by his devotion to the interests of his family, and so devoted to his brother that he was capable of everything, even of a crime, in order to get rid of any man who stood in the way of that glorious fortune.

Now, to share the friendship of the king and the gratitude of France with the Duc de Guise, was, in the opinion of the Cardinal de Lorraine, to stand in the way of the fortune of the haughty house whose representatives were soon to claim equality with the kings of France, and who, perhaps, would not have been contented with that equality, if, thirty years later, Henri III. had not annihilated by the agency of the poniards of the Forty-five the fortune elevated so high by the imprudence of Henri II.

The constable and admiral prisoners, one man alone, as we have said, disturbed the Cardinal de Lorraine; that man was Dandelot. From that moment, it was settled that Dandelot should disappear.

Dandelot belonged to the Reformed religion; and as he wished to attract his brother, who was still hesitating, to that opinion, he sent to Antwerp, where the King of Spain held him prisoner, certain books of Geneva, with a letter in which he urged him to abandon the Papal heresy for the light of Calvin.

This letter of Dandelot unfortunately fell into the hands of the Cardinal de Lorraine.

It happened at a time when Henri II. exercised the greatest rigours towards the Protestants. Dandelot had already been several times denounced to him as stained with heresy. But he had not believed in the accusation, or rather, perhaps, pretended not to believe in it, so hard did he find it to part from a companion who had been brought up along with him since he was seven years old, and who had just made such a return for the friendship of the king by great and real services.

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But with such evidence of heresy before him as this letter, there was no longer room for doubt.

Still, the king declared that no proof, even though it was in the handwriting of Dandelot, could have any value in his eyes, and he could only be convinced by a confession from the lips of the accused nobleman himself.

He therefore resolved to interrogate Dandelot as to his new belief in presence of all the court.

But, not wishing to take him by surprise, he invited the Cardinal de Châtillon, his brother, and François de Montmorency, his cousin, to bring Dandelot to the country residence of the queen near Meaux, where he was then staying, and at the same time to prevail on their relative to give such an answer as would exculpate him publicly.

The king was at dinner when the arrival of Dandelot was announced.

His reception of Dandelot was most gracious: he assured him he could never forget the services he had just rendered him; then, approaching the question of the reports that were spread abroad as to his opinions, he told him that he was accused not only of thinking, but of speaking evil of the mysteries of our holy religion; at last, expressing his thought still more plainly, he said, —

"Dandelot, I command you to tell what is your opinion of the holy sacrifice of the Mass."

Dandelot knew in advance that an expression of his views would pain the king excessively, and as he had a great respect, as well as a profound affection for Henri, he said humbly: —

"Sire, can you not dispense a subject so profoundly devoted to his king as I am from answering a question of pure belief, with regard to which, great and powerful though you be, you have no more competency than other men?"

But Henri had not come there with the intention of giving way; he therefore ordered Dandelot to answer categorically.

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Thereupon, seeing there was no means of eluding the question, —

"Sire," replied Dandelot, "penetrated with the liveliest gratitude for all the favours I have received from your Majesty, I am ready to expose my life and sacrifice my property in your service; but, since you force me to confess it, in matter of religion I recognise no master but God, and my conscience does not permit me to disguise my sentiments from you. Consequently, sire, I do not fear to proclaim that the Mass has not only no warrant from our Lord Jesus Christ or from his apostles, but is a detestable invention of men."

At this horrible blasphemy, regarded by the rigid Huguenots as a truth that could not be confessed too loudly, the king started with amazement, and passing from amazement to anger, —

"Dandelot!" he cried, "until now I defended you against those who attacked you; but, after such abominable heresy, I order you to leave my presence, and I declare that, if you were not in a certain sense my pupil, I would pass my sword through your body."

Dandelot remained perfectly calm, bowed respectfully, and, without replying to this terrible apostrophe, retired.

But Henri did not preserve the same coolness. No sooner did the tapestry at the door of the dining-hall fall behind Dandelot, than he ordered La Bordaisière, the master of his wardrobe, to arrest the culprit at once, and conduct him as a prisoner to Meaux.

The order was executed, but this was not enough for the Cardinal de Lorraine; he insisted that the post of colonel-general of the French infantry should be taken from him and given to Blaise de Montluc, who was devoted to the house of Guise, having been page to René II., Duc de Lorraine.

Such was the reward of Dandelot for the immense services he had just rendered the king, and which the king had promised never to forget.

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Portrait of Mary, Queen of England.

Photo-Etching. — From an old Print.

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We know what happened later on to his brother, Admiral Coligny.

This was the reason why the name of Dandelot was not uttered among those names which aroused enthusiasm as victory after victory was reported.

On the other hand, neither was Emmanuel Philibert inactive; he was making a vigorous struggle against this supreme effort of France.

The battle of Gravelines, won by Count Lamoral d'Egmont, who defeated Maréchal de Termes, was one of those days which France had to inscribe among the number of her unfortunate days.

Then, as in those private combats in which, after fighting with equal success for a time, two adversaries worthy of each other take a step backwards in silence, both feeling equally fatigued, and rest on the hilt of their swords, eye riveted on eye the while, so France and Spain, Guise and Emmanuel Philibert, took time to breathe, — the Duc de Guise at Thionville, Emmanuel Philibert at Brussels.

As to King Philip, he commanded in person the army of the Low Countries, consisting of thirty-five thousand infantry and fifteen thousand cavalry, encamped on the river Anthée. It was there he learned of the death of his wife, Queen Mary, who had just expired, owing to dropsy, which she persisted in mistaking for pregnancy.

The principal army of France was, on the other hand, entrenched behind the Somme, and, like the Spanish army and its leaders, was for the moment inactive. It was made up of sixteen thousand French, eighteen thousand reiters, twenty-six thousand German fantassins, and six thousand Swiss; we are told by Montluc that when in battle array it occupied a league and a half, and that to make the tour of it required three hours.

Finally, Charles V., as we have stated in the first part of this work, died on the 21st of September, 1558, at the monastery of Saint-Just, in the arms of the Archbishop of Toledo.

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And as the events of this earth are full of contrasts, the young queen, Mary Stuart, aged fifteen, had just married the dauphin, aged seventeen.

Such was the condition of public and private affairs in France, Spain, and England, and consequently in the world, when one morning, in the month of October, 1558, Emmanuel — who, clad in that mourning of which Hamlet speaks, the mourning that extends from the raiment to the heart, was giving some military orders to Scianca-Ferro, now entirely cured of his wound and about to be despatched as a courier to King Philip — saw Leona enter his cabinet, beautiful and radiant as ever in her usual costume, but unable to veil a deep tinge of melancholy under her smiling aspect.

We have seen the fair young girl disappear during the terrible French campaign which was finished at the close of the preceding year. In fact, in order not to expose her to the fatigues of camp, battles, and sieges, Emmanuel Philibert insisted on her remaining at Cambray; then, the campaign over, the two lovers came together again, with a greater happiness and a deeper love than ever, and as, from weariness or disgust, Emmanuel Philibert took little part in the campaign of 1558, which he directed from Brussels, the two lovers were rarely asunder.

Accustomed to read even the most secret thoughts of Leona on her countenance, Emmanuel Philibert was struck by the shade of sadness which almost quenched the forced smile of the young girl.

As to Scianca-Ferro, less clever than his friend in reading the mysterious secrets of the heart, he saw in the entrance of Leona only her daily appearance in the cabinet of the prince; and, after shaking the hand of the handsome page — whose sex was no longer a secret for him — in a fashion half-respectful, half-friendly, he took the despatch he was to carry to King Philip; he left carelessly humming a Picard song and jingling his spurs as he passed along.

Emmanuel Philibert followed him with his eyes to the

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door, and when the young man disappeared, he gazed anxiously on Leona.

Leona continued to smile; she was standing, leaning on an armchair, as if, without some support, her legs would have refused to sustain her. Her cheeks were pale, and the tears, which she had not wholly wiped away, shone in her eyes.

"My dear child, what has happened to you this morning?" in tones of that paternal tenderness which marks the passage of the lover from adolescence to manhood.

In fact, on the 8th of July, 1558, Emmanuel Philibert was just thirty years old. Protected by misfortune, which forced him to become a great man, — he might not have become such if he had inherited his great states without contest or opposition, — Emmanuel Philibert, at the comparatively early age of thirty, had acquired a military reputation that was fully on a level with the first military reputations of the epoch; namely, that of the constable, the Duc de Guise, the admiral, and old Marshal Strozzi, who had died so gloriously at the siege of Thionville.

"I have," said Leona, in her harmonious voice, "a memory to recall and a request to make."

"Leona knows that if my memory is at fault, my heart is faithful. Let us first see what the request is."

And, at the same time, he summoned an usher, and ordered that he should not be interrupted by any person whatever. He then made a sign to Leona to be seated on a pile of cushions near him, which was the usual seat of the young girl when conversing with her lover.

Leona took her accustomed seat; and, resting her elbows on the knees of Emmanuel, with her face between her hands, her eyes gazed into his with a look of infinite sweetness, in which might be read, not only boundless love, but boundless devotion.

"Well?" he said, with a smile that betrayed anxiety, just as that of Leona betrayed sadness.

"What day of the month is to-day, Emmanuel?" asked Leona.

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"The 17th of November, if I am not mistaken," replied the duke.

"Does not this anniversary recall, my dearest prince, an anniversary which deserves to be celebrated?"

Emmanuel smiled more frankly than at first, for his memory had now strayed back to the past, and revived every detail of the event to which Leona alluded.

"Twenty-four years ago, on this very day and almost at this very hour," said he, "carried away by my horse, which had been startled by the sight of a furious bull, I found, a hundred yards from the village of Oleggio, on the border of a little stream flowing into the Ticino, a dead woman and a child that was almost dead. This child I had the happiness to restore to life was my beloved Leona!"

"Have you ever had for a single day any reason to regret that meeting, Emmanuel?"

"On the contrary, I have blessed Heaven every moment the remembrance of it has occurred to my memory," replied the prince; "for this child has become the guardian angel of my happiness."

"And if, for the first time, I asked you to make me a promise, Emmanuel, would you think me too obtrusive, and would you refuse my request?"

"You trouble me, Leona!" said Emmanuel. "What request can you possibly make that is not granted on the instant?"

Leona grew pale, and, in trembling tones, while at the same time she seemed to be listening to some distant sound, she said:—

"Swear to me, Emmanuel, by the glory of your name, by the motto of your house, *God remains to him who lacks everything*, by the solemn promise made to your dying father, that you will grant what I ask!"

The Duke of Savoy shook his head like a person who feels that some great unknown sacrifice is about to be accomplished, but is also convinced that this sacrifice will be to the profit of his honour and fortune.

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Then, solemnly raising his hand, —

"All you ask, Leona," he said, "shall be granted, provided you do not ask me never to see you again."

"Oh!" murmured Leona, "I suspected you would not swear without making some restriction. Thanks, Emmanuel! Now, what I request, nay, what I demand, in virtue of the oath you have just taken, is that you do not oppose on any personal grounds the peace between France and Spain, the articles of which my brother is coming to submit to you in the name of King Philip and King Henri."

"The peace! — your brother! How do you know what I am ignorant of, Leona?"

"A powerful prince thought he had need of the services of your humble servant, Emmanuel, for the purpose of influencing you in a certain direction; and that is the reason I know what you do not know yet, but which you are sure to know before long."

Then, as a great noise of horses was heard in the square of the Hôtel de Ville, and under the cabinet of the prince, Leona rose and gave orders to the usher, in the name of the Duke of Savoy, to admit the leader of the cavalcade.

A moment after, while Emmanuel was holding the arm of Leona, who wished to withdraw, the usher announced, —

"His Excellency Comte Odoardo Maraviglia, envoy of their Majesties the Kings of Spain and France."

"Let him enter," replied Emmanuel, in a voice that trembled almost as much as that of Leona had done a few moments before.

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II.

THE ENVOY OF THE KINGS OF SPAIN AND FRANCE.

Our readers have recognised the brother of Leona by the name which has just been announced, — that young man condemned to death for attempting to assassinate the murderer of his father, and yet recommended to Philip II. by Charles V. on the very day of his abdication.

Our readers will also recall that, although Leona recognises in Odoardo Maraviglia a brother, the latter is far from suspecting that Leona, of whom he has barely caught a glimpse under the tent of Emmanuel at Hesdin, is his sister.

The Duke of Savoy and his page are the only ones who know the secret which has saved Odoardo's life.

Now, how did it happen that Odoardo became the mandatory of Philip and Henri at the same time? This we will explain in a few words.

Son of an ambassador of François I., reared among the royal pages of Henri II. when the latter was dauphin, publicly adopted by Charles V. on the day of his abdication, Odoardo enjoyed equal favour at the courts of France and Spain.

It was known, moreover, although no person was acquainted with the details of that event, that it was to Emmanuel Philibert he owed his life.

It was, then, quite natural that those interested in bringing about a peace should have conceived the idea of having the man who had at once the ear of the King of Spain and the King of France take charge of the preliminaries, and that, when the chief articles had received the

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sanction of the two sovereigns, the same man should have been sent to Emmanuel Philibert to prevail on him to adopt these same articles; especially after the report spread that Odoardo Maraviglia not only owed his life to the intercession of Emmanuel Philibert, but also his recommendation by Charles V. to Philip II., and the extraordinary favours he received from the Spanish court.

Nor had those who conceived the idea of thus bringing Odoardo to the front made a mistake.

The preliminaries of the peace — a peace equally desired by Philip and Henri — were arranged with more promptitude than is usual in affairs of such importance; and, although the reason for Emmanuel Philibert's sympathy with the son of François I.'s ambassador was unknown, it was correctly thought that no more agreeable messenger could be sent to the Duke of Savoy.

He rose, therefore, and, in spite of the reflection that there was for him a private sorrow at the bottom of this great political event, he offered his hand to Odoardo, who kissed it respectfully.

"Monseigneur," he said, "you see in me a very happy man; for I am about to prove in the future as perhaps I may have done in the past, that your Highness has saved the life of a grateful man."

"Your life has been really saved, my dear Odoardo, by the generosity of the noble emperor for whom we are both in mourning. I have been but the humble instrument of his clemency."

"Be it so, monseigneur; but for me you have been the visible messenger of the heavenly favour. I must, therefore, worship you, as the ancient patriarchs did the angels who announced to them the will of God. For that matter, monseigneur, I also am sent as a messenger of peace to you."

"It was as such you were announced, Odoardo, it was as such you were expected, and it is as such that I receive you."

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"I was announced? you expected me? Pardon me, monseigneur, but I believed I was the first to announce my presence to you by my presence itself; and as to the proposals I was charged to lay before you, they were so secret —"

"Don't be disturbed, M. l'Ambassadeur," said Emmanuel, forcing a smile. "Have you not heard that certain men have their familiar demon, who warns them of the most hidden things in advance? I am one of those men."

"Then," said Odoardo, "you know the motive of my visit?"

"Yes; but the motive only, not the details."

"I am ready, when your Highness desires, to lay those details before you."

And Odoardo, bowing, made a sign to indicate that they were not alone.

Leona saw the sign, and was about to retire; but the prince detained her.

"I am always alone when I am with this young man, Odoardo," said he; "for this young man is the familiar demon of whom I spoke just now. Remain, Leone; remain!" added the duke. "*We* ought to know all that may be proposed. I am listening; speak, M. l'Ambassadeur."

"What would you say, monseigneur, if, in exchange for Ham, Le Catelet, and Saint-Quentin, I were to announce to your Highness that France restores you a hundred and thirty-eight cities?"

"I would say," replied Emmanuel, "that it is impossible."

"And yet it is true, monseigneur."

"And is Calais among the cities to be restored by France?"

"No. The new Queen of England, who, under pretence of religious scruples, refuses to marry the husband of the late queen, her sister Mary, has been a little sacrificed in all this. However, it is only on certain conditions

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that France keeps Calais and the other cities of Picardy taken by M. de Guise from the English."

"What are those conditions?"

"The King of France must restore them at the end of eight years if he does not prefer to pay fifty thousand crowns to England."

"He will give them, unless he is as poor as Baudouin, who pledged the crown of our Lord!"

"Oh! it was a sort of satisfaction it was thought as well to give to Elizabeth, and with which she was, luckily, well contented, having considerable trouble at present with the Pope."

"Has he not declared her a bastard?" inquired Emmanuel.

"Yes; and it will cost him his supremacy over England. Elizabeth has retorted by declaring all the edicts published by the late Queen Mary in favour of the Catholic religion abolished, and has re-enacted all the measures of Henry VIII. and Edward VI. against the Pope; and, like these two sovereigns, she has added to her royal prerogatives the title of supreme head of the Church."

"And what is France doing with the little Queen of Scotland in the midst of this great quarrel?"

"Henri II. has declared Mary Stuart Queen of Scotland and England, as heiress of the late Queen Mary Tudor, as sole descendant of James V., grandson of Henry VII., King of England, and in virtue of the illegitimacy of Elizabeth, declared a bastard by an act which has never been repealed."

"Yes," said Emmanuel Philibert; "still, there is a will of Henry VIII. which declares Elizabeth heiress to the crown, in default of Mary and Edward, and the Act of Parliament proclaiming Elizabeth queen was based on this document. But, if you please, let us return to our own affairs, M. l'Ambassadeur."

"Well, monseigneur, these are the principal conditions of the treaty, the bases on which it is proposed to establish it:—

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"'The two kings — the King of Spain and the King of France — will labour conjointly to restore peace to the Church by using their efforts to have a general council summoned.

"'There will be an amnesty for all who may have embraced the interests of either sovereign, except for those who have been banished from Naples, Sicily, and Milan: these are excluded from the general pardon.

"'It is stipulated further that the cities and all the fortresses taken by France from the King of Spain, and particularly Thionville, Marienbourg, Ivoy, Montmédy, Damvilliers, Hesdin, the county of Charolais, and Valence in La Loménie, shall be restored to the said King of Spain.

"'That Ivoy shall be dismantled, in compensation for the destruction of Thérouanne.

"'That King Philip shall marry the Princess Élisabeth of France, and shall receive with her a dowry of four hundred thousand crowns.

"'That the fortress of Bouillon shall be restored to the Bishop of Liège.

"'That the Infante of Portugal shall be put in possession of the property inherited by him from Queen Eleonora, his mother, widow of Francis I.

"'Finally, that the two kings shall restore to the Duke of Mantua all they have taken from him in Montferrat, and shall leave standing whatever citadels they may have built there.'"

"And are all these conditions granted by the King of France?" asked Emmanuel.

"All. What do you say to them?"

"I say that the whole thing is marvellous, M. l'Ambassadeur; and if this has been brought about by your influence, the Emperor Charles V., when he recommended you to his son Don Philip at the time of his abdication, did a remarkably wise action."

"Alas, no, monseigneur!" returned Odoardo; "the two principal agents of this strange peace are Madame de Valentinois, who is disturbed at seeing the glory of the House of Guise and the influence of Queen Catherine increase, and M. de Montmorency, who is afraid that, while he is a prisoner, the Lorraines may destroy the power of his family."

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"Ah!" said Emmanuel, "now I see why the constable asked permission from King Philip so often to pass into France, and why he has requested me to accept a ransom of two hundred crowns for himself and the admiral, — a request I have just submitted to the king, through the agency of my squire Scianca-Ferro, who left here a short time before you arrived."

"The king will surely be very ungrateful if he does not grant that request," replied the ambassador.

Then after a moment's silence, and looking at the prince, —

"But you, monseigneur," he said, "do not ask what has been done for you."

Emmanuel felt the hand of Leona tremble in his own.

"For me?" answered the prince. "I was hoping they had forgotten me."

"To do so, King Philip and King Henri would have had to select a different negotiator from him whose life you have saved, monseigneur. Oh, no, no, thank God! Providence has been just this time, and the conqueror of Saint-Quentin will be recompensed to the full."

Emmanuel exchanged a sorrowful look with his page, and waited.

"Monseigneur," said Odoardo, "all the strong places on both sides of the Alps are restored to you, with the exception of Turin, Pignerol, Chieri, Chivas, and Villeneuve, which are to remain in possession of France until the day when your Highness has a male heir. Moreover, until the birth of this heir, who will be the means of bringing to a close that great lawsuit between Louise of Savoy and Piedmont, the King of Spain is allowed to garrison Asti and Verceil."

"Then," said Emmanuel, quickly, "if I do not marry?"

"You lose five cities so magnificent that a prince might be content with them alone."

"But," said Leona, with equal quickness, "monseigneur, the Duke of Savoy will marry. Would your Excellency

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have the goodness to bring the matter to an end by telling the prince what alliance is intended for him?"

Odoardo regarded the young man with astonishment; then his eyes turned to the duke, whose countenance expressed the most cruel anxiety.

"Oh, reassure yourself, monseigneur," said he; "the wife destined for you is worthy of a king."

And as the pale lips of Emmanuel continued shut, instead of opening to put the question Odoardo was expecting, the latter added:—

"It is Madame Marguerite of France, sister of King Henri II.; and besides the entire duchy of Savoy, she brings her fortunate husband a dowry of three hundred thousand crowns of gold."

"Madame Marguerite of France," murmured Emmanuel, "is a great princess, I know; but it has always been my determination, monsieur, to regain my duchy by arms, not by marriage."

"But," said Odoardo, "Madame Marguerite is a worthy reward for your victories, and not many princes have had the good fortune to obtain the hand of a king's daughter and sister in return for a battle gained and a city captured."

"Oh," murmured Emmanuel, "why did I not break my sword at the beginning of this campaign!"

Then, as Odoardo was regarding him with amazement,—

"Would your Excellency be so good," said Leona, "as to leave me for a moment alone with the prince?"

Odoardo continued dumb, but his eyes were questioning those of Emmanuel.

"Only for a quarter of an hour," persisted Leona, "and in a quarter of an hour your Excellency will receive the answer you desire."

The duke made a gesture in the negative, at once checked by a mute, appealing movement of Leona.

Odoardo bowed and withdrew. He had seen that the mysterious page alone could vanquish the incomprehen-

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sible resistance with which the Duke of Savoy seemed resolved to meet the wishes of the kings of France and Spain.

After a quarter of an hour, an usher again summoned Maraviglia into the presence of the Duke of Savoy.

Emmanuel Philibert was alone.

Sad, but resigned, he offered his hand to the envoy.

"Odoardo," he said, "you may return to those who sent you and tell them that Emmanuel Philibert accepts gratefully the favours which the kings of France and Spain are about to bestow on the Duke of Savoy."

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III.

IN THE APARTMENTS OF THE QUEEN.

THANKS to the skill of the negotiator, a man gifted with all the diplomatic skill which is supposed to be one of the characteristics of the Florentine and Milanese race; thanks especially to the interest the two kings had in keeping the matter religiously secret, — nothing, except a few of those vague reports that always accompany great events, had leaked out at court so far regarding the great projects lately communicated by Odoardo Maraviglia to the Duke of Savoy, projects that were to cost France so dear.

Great astonishment, therefore, was excited, when two horsemen, each attended by a squire, and each coming from an opposite direction, met at the gates of the Louvre, four days after the interview we have just related, and recognised each other, the one as the Connétable de Montmorency, who was believed to be a prisoner at Antwerp, the other as the Duc de Guise, who was believed to be in the camp of Compiègne.

These two furious enemies did not spend much time in paying compliments. As an imperial prince, the Duc de Guise took precedence of the entire French nobility. M. de Montmorency therefore made his horse take a step backwards, and the Duc de Guise made his take a step forwards; so that it would almost have looked as if the constable was merely the squire of some gentleman in the suite of the prince, if, on entering the Louvre, — where the king resided in winter, — one had not gone to the right, and the other to the left.

One, the Duc de Guise, was about to visit Queen Catherine de Médicis; the other, the constable, was about to

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visit Diane de Poitiers. Both were expected with equal impatience.

We will, with the reader's permission, accompany the most important of our characters on his way to the most important, in appearance at least, of the two women we have just named; that is to say, the Duc de Guise on his way to the queen.

Catherine de Médicis was a Florentine; the Guises were Lorrainers. It was not astonishing, therefore, that, on the arrival of the fatal news of the battle of Saint-Quentin, Catherine and the cardinal, who saw their own influence lowered by that which the post of commander-in-chief naturally gave to the constable, had but one single idea; and that idea was not that this battle brought France within an inch of destruction, but that the capture of the constable and one of his sons would ruin the credit of the Montmorencys. Now, by a natural game of seesaw, political and military in its character, when the credit of the Montmorencys was down, the credit of the Guises was up.

So, as we have seen already, the whole civil administration of the realm was confided to the hands of the Cardinal de Lorraine, while Duc François de Guise, who had been expected to come as a saviour from Italy, had on his arrival concentrated the entire military power in his hands, with the title of Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom.

We saw, moreover, what use the Duc de Guise made of this power: the army reorganised, Calais restored to France, Guines, Ham, and Thionville taken by storm, Arlon surprised, — such had been the result of a single campaign.

The duke had just been delighting himself with an immense dream of ambition likely enough to be realised, indeed, one of the pleasantest dreams a Guise could entertain, when he was awakened from it by a vague rumour. People were talking of the return of the constable to Paris; now this return, if it took place, might be regarded as the preliminary to a treaty of peace.

The effect of this simple rumour on the duke was to

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make him quit the camp of Compiègne directly; when he reached Louvres, half-way on the road to the capital, he met a special messenger sent by his brother to bid him come to Paris as soon as he possibly could. The messenger had no other instructions for him; but the duke, from previous information, suspected why he was summoned.

When he met M. de Montmorency at the entrance to the Louvre, he had no longer any doubt; M. de Montmorency was free, and peace, in all probability, would be the consequence of this unexpected freedom.

M. de Guise had believed the captivity of the constable would be an everlasting captivity, like that of King John; the disappointment was cruel.

M. de Montmorency had lost everything; M. de Guise had saved everything, and yet the vanquished was about to appear at court on the same footing as the victor. And who knows but that, thanks to the protection of Madame de Valentinois, the vanquished would enjoy the greater favour?

These were the thoughts that darkened the visage of the Duc de Guise at the moment he was mounting the stairs leading to the apartments of Queen Catherine; while, on the contrary, the constable was mounting, with joyous countenance, the stairs leading to the apartments of Diane de Poitiers, at the other side of the court.

The duke was evidently expected; for, as soon as his name was announced, the tapestry of the queen's room was raised, and the voice of Catherine was heard crying in her hoarse Florentine accent, —

"Enter, M. le Duc! enter!"

The queen was alone. Duc François looked around as if he expected to find some one with her.

"Ah, yes!" exclaimed Catherine, "you are looking for your brother, are you not?"

"Does your Majesty know," he said, omitting the usual compliments as unsuitable to the situation, "that my brother sent me a messenger with directions for me to come at once to Paris?"

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"Yes," said Catherine; "but as the messenger only started at one in the afternoon, we did not expect you until evening, or indeed until late in the night."

"Ah, it was because the messenger met me halfway."

"And what was bringing you back to Paris?"

"My anxiety."

"Duke," said Catherine, abandoning her usual artifices for the nonce, "you have good cause for anxiety; for never was anxiety better founded."

At that moment, the noise of a key grating in one lock, then in a second, was heard; the door of a private entrance, opening on the corridors of the queen, was pushed aside, and the cardinal appeared.

Without taking time to salute his brother, and as if he was in the chamber of a princess of his own rank, or even of inferior rank, he marched straight up to Catherine and François, and with a change in his voice that denoted the importance of his tidings, said, —

"Do you know who has just arrived? Do you know?"

"Yes," replied Duc François, who guessed to whom the cardinal alluded; "I met him at the door of the Louvre."

"Whom do you say?" asked Catherine.

"The constable," replied both together.

"Ah!" groaned Catherine, as if she had received a stab in the heart. "But perhaps he has returned to stay only a few days, as on other occasions."

"No!" returned the cardinal. "He returns for good; he and the admiral have, through the interposition of the Duke of Savoy, been ransomed for two hundred thousand crowns, — a sum he will surely compel the king to pay. By the cross of Lorraine!" continued the cardinal, angrily biting his moustache, "an ordinary gentleman would never have been able to pay for the consequences of Montmorency's stupidity; and if it were estimated as it deserves, the Colignys, Montmorencys, and Dandelots would be ruined by the assessment."

"But what have you learned, on the whole," said Catherine, "more than we know?"

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"Not much; but I am expecting every moment your old messenger, M. de Nemours," said Charles de Lorraine, turning to his brother. "M. de Nemours is a member of the house of Savoy; he is not suspected of belonging to our party, and as the wind is blowing at this moment from the direction of Piedmont, perhaps he may bring us fresh news."

At this moment there was a respectful tap on the door by which the Cardinal de Lorraine had lately entered and which he had locked behind him.

"Ah!" said Charles de Lorraine, "it is he probably."

"Open, then," said Catherine.

And not caring what those who saw the key of her chamber in the hands of the Cardinal de Lorraine might think of the matter, she pushed the cardinal towards the door.

It was in fact the same Duc de Nemours whom we have seen already introduced into Catherine's apartment by Charles de Lorraine a year and a half ago, on the morning when the king and a portion of the court were hunting in the forest of Saint-Germain.

He was neither as anxious as Duc François, nor as familiar as his brother; therefore he was about to salute Catherine according to the rules of the most scrupulous etiquette, but the latter did not give him time.

"M. le Duc," she said, "our dear cardinal tells us that you have probably news for us. Speak. What do you know of this wretched peace?"

"Why," replied Nemours, "I can give you full information, and that from the best source; I have just left the negotiator, Odoardo Maraviglia, who had himself just left the Duke of Savoy."

"Then you must be well informed," said Charles de Lorraine, "for Duke Emmanuel of Savoy is the party chiefly interested in this game, since his principality is the stake."

"Well, it is astounding!" said M. de Nemours; "but

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whether through contempt of greatness, or — as is much more probable — for some mysterious reason, such as a secret love affair, or engagements entered into with another, Emmanuel Philibert has received the overtures made to him with more sadness than joy."

"Perhaps also," said Duc François, bitterly, "he has been badly rewarded by royal gratitude? There would be nothing astonishing in that; he, too, ranks among the conquerors."

"In that case," said Nemours, "he would be hard to please, for his dominions are restored to him almost intact, save five cities, and these cities will also be restored to him when he has a male child by his wife."

"And the wife, — who is to be the wife?" asked the Cardinal de Lorraine, quickly.

"Ah!" replied Nemours, "then you have not yet heard the news. His wife will be Madame Marguerite of France."

"The king's sister!" cried Catherine.

"She will have reached her ambition," said Duc François; "she would marry none but a sovereign prince."

"Only," said Catherine, with that acidity peculiar to women when talking of one another, "only, she has had to wait a long time, poor thing! for, if I am not mistaken, she is now thirty-six years old; but, in fine, she has not, in all probability, lost much by waiting. And how did Emmanuel Philibert take the news of this royal alliance?"

"Very coldly at first. Comte Maraviglia declares there was a moment when the duke was going to refuse; but after a quarter of an hour's reflection he accepted. But, when he saw the ambassador again in the evening, he desired not to be considered positively engaged with respect to the marriage before he had seen Princess Marguerite. You understand, however, that the ambassador was careful not to make this hesitation public, and has represented Emmanuel Philibert, on the contrary, to King Henri as the most delighted and grateful of princes."

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"And," asked Duc François, "what are the provinces to be surrendered?"

"All," replied the young man, "with the exception of the cities of Turin, Pignerol, Chieri, Chivas, and Villeneuve d'Asti, which will be restored to his first heir male. Besides, it would be shabby in the King of France to bargain over a few towns and castles, since he is surrendering a hundred and ninety-eight to the Queen of England and King of Spain."

"Good!" said the Duc de Guise, turning pale in spite of himself; "and perchance you have heard that Calais was among the number of these towns and castles surrendered by the king?"

"I know nothing about that," replied Nemours.

"*Mordieu!*" said Duc François, "to do so would be to tell me that my sword is useless; I would go and offer it to some sovereign who would utilise it better — did I not," he added, between his teeth, "intend to keep it for myself."

At this moment a servant of the cardinal, who had been placed on guard by his Eminence, hastily raised the tapestry, and cried, —

"The king!"

"Where?" asked Catherine.

"At the end of the grand gallery," replied the servant.

Catherine looked at Duc François, as if to question him as to what had better be done.

"I shall wait for him," he said.

"Wait for him, monseigneur," said M. de Nemours; "you are a taker of cities and a winner of battles, and you may wait for all the kings in the world with a bearing loftier than theirs. But do you not believe that when his Majesty meets here the Cardinal de Lorraine and the Duc de Guise he may find that quite enough without me?"

"Yes," said Catherine, "there is no use in his finding you here. — The key, my dear cardinal."

Charles de Lorraine, who held the key in his hand,

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ready for use at any moment, gave it hastily to the queen. The door opened before the Duc de Nemours, and was just shut discreetly on the news-teller, when Henri de Valois, with gloomy face and wrinkled forehead, appeared at the threshold of the opposite door.

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IV.

IN THE APARTMENTS OF THE FAVOURITE.

If we have followed the Duc de Guise first, instead of the constable, it was not because what was to pass in the apartments of Madame de Valentinois would be less interesting than what we have seen pass in the apartments of Catherine de Médicis; but it was because François de Guise was a greater personage than M. de Montmorency, as, indeed, we have said, and because Catherine de Médicis was a greater lady than Madame de Valentinois. — Honour to whom honour is due.

But now that we have shown our deference for the royal supremacy, let us see what took place in the apartment of the fair Diane, and try to find out why King Henri presented himself before his wife with gloomy face and wrinkled forehead.

The arrival of the constable was no more a mystery for the Duchesse de Valentinois than the return of the Duc de Guise was a secret for Queen Catherine de Médicis. Each was staking her cards on the table, Catherine crying, "Guise!" and Diane, "Montmorency!"

Just as there were scandalous stories told of the queen and the cardinal, so wicked tongues wagged, as we have said already, on the subject of the relations between the favourite and the constable. Now, how did it happen that an old man of sixty-eight, peevish, crotchety, and brutal, became the rival of a king full of grace and gallantry, twenty-eight years younger? It is a mystery the solution of which we leave to those skilful anatomists who claim that no fibre of the heart can escape their investigation.

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But what was real, incontestable, and visible to all eyes, was the almost passive obedience of the fair Diane, — that favourite who was more of a queen than the true queen, not only to the wishes, but even to the whims of the constable.

It is true this had lasted for twenty years; that is to say, from the time when Diane was thirty and the constable forty-eight.

It was, therefore, with an exclamation of joy that she heard announced, —

"Monseigneur le Connétable de Montmorency."

She was not, however, alone; in a corner of the apartment, half reclining on a pile of cushions, two fair children were testing the joys of life, into which they had entered through the gate of love: they were the young Queen Mary Stuart and the little Dauphin François, married now for the last six months, and more in love, perhaps, than on the eve of their marriage.

The young sovereign was trying to fix on the head of her husband a velvet cap, which was a little too large for it, but which she was insisting was the right size.

They were so deeply engrossed in this grave occupation that, important as was, politically speaking, the announcement of the return of the illustrious prisoner to Paris, they did not hear it, or, if they did hear it, they did not pay the least attention to it.

Love is such a beautiful thing at fifteen and seventeen that a year of love then is worth twenty years of existence! Was not François II., dying at the age of nineteen, after two years of happiness with the young and beautiful Mary, more fortunate than the latter, who lived thirty years longer than he, but spent three of those thirty years in flight and eighteen in prison?

But Diane, without paying any attention to the two charming beings who were living their exceptional and favoured life in a corner of the apartment, went with open arms towards the constable, and offered him her forehead to kiss.

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More prudent than she, he stopped as he was about to press his lips on it, and exclaimed, —

"Ha! we are not alone, it seems, my fair duchess."

"You are right, my dear constable," she replied.

"Of course I am! I may be old, but my eyes are still good enough to see something stirring yonder."

Diane burst out laughing. "The something stirring yonder," said she, "is the Queen of England and Scotland and the heir to the crown of France. But don't be alarmed; they are too busy with their own affairs to concern themselves about ours."

"Hum!" said the constable, "are matters going on so badly on the other side of the Channel that even these young brains are troubled about them?"

"My dear constable, the Scotch might be at London, or the English at Edinburgh, — which would be, in either case, great news, — yet, though this news were cried as loudly as that of your return, I question if either of these two children would turn their heads to hear it. Oh, no, they are absorbed by things much more important: they are in love, my dear constable. What is the kingdom of England and Scotland to them, in comparison with that word *love*, which gives the kingdom of heaven to those who pronounce it between two kisses?"

"Ah, siren that you are!" murmured the old constable. "But, come now, how are our affairs getting on?"

"Why, now that you are here," said Diane, "I think they are likely to get on marvellously well. The peace is concluded, or very nearly so; M. de Guise is about to be forced to sheathe his sword; as there is no need of a lieutenant-general, but as there is always need of a constable, my own dear constable will soon have his head above water, and take first place in the kingdom, instead of the second."

"The game has not been badly played, *tête Dieu!*" said the constable. "Remains the question of ransom. You know, my fair Diane, that I have been released on parole, but that I owe two hundred thousand crowns."

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"Well, then?" asked the duchess, with a smile.

"Well, then, *mille diables!* I count on not having to pay this ransom."

"For whom were you fighting, my dear constable, when you were taken?"

"*Pardieu!* it was for the king, I should think, though the wound I received was, beyond any doubt, for myself."

"Well, then, the king shall pay it; but I thought I heard it said, my dear constable, that if I brought the negotiations for peace to a successful end, Duke Emmanuel, who is a generous prince, would probably make you a present of these two hundred thousand crowns."

"Did I say so?" asked the constable.

"You did not say so to me: you wrote it."

"The devil!" said the constable, laughing; "it will, then, be necessary to make you a partner in the speculation. Well, look here; we are going to play fair and open. Yes, the Duke of Savoy did release me from the obligation of paying these two hundred thousand crowns; but as my fine nephew, the admiral, is too proud a fellow to accept such a release, I shall not say a single word to him about it."

"Good! so that he will hand you over his one hundred thousand crowns, just as if you had to pay them to Emmanuel Philibert?"

"Perfectly correct."

"And that makes three hundred thousand free of all liabilities?"

"Yes, decidedly! they owe the pleasure of being in my hands to the fair Duchesse de Valentinois. But, as the labourer deserves his hire, this is what we are going to do with these three hundred thousand crowns —"

"In the first place," interrupted the duchess, "we must apply two hundred thousand to indemnify our dear constable for the expenses of his campaign, and for the loss and prejudice his eighteen months' imprisonment have caused him."

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"Do you think it too much?"

"Our dear constable is a lion, and it is just that he should have the lion's share. — And the remaining hundred thousand?"

"Will be divided thus: half — that is to say, fifty thousand — will buy trinkets and knickknacks for the adornment of my fair duchess; and fifty thousand will endow our poor children, who are sure, besides, to be in a very wretched condition if the king does not add something to the portion an unhappy father can give his son only by bleeding himself to death!"

"It is true our daughter Diane has already her dowry as Duchesse de Castro, and this dowry is a hundred thousand crowns. But know right well, my dear constable, that if the king, in his munificence, chooses to think that it is not enough for the wife of a Montmorency and the daughter of a king, it is not I who, when he loosens his purse-strings, shall attempt to tighten them."

The constable regarded the favourite with a sort of admiration.

"Good!" said he; "does our king still wear the magic ring you placed on his finger?"

"Always," answered the duchess, smiling; "and as I fancy I hear his Majesty's steps, you are going to have the proof of it."

"Ah, ah!" said the constable, "he always comes, then, by this corridor, and always has the key of this door?"

And, in fact, the king had the key of the secret door of Diane, just as the cardinal had the key of the secret door of Catherine.

There were many secret doors in the Louvre, and all had one key, when they had not two.

"Good!" said the duchess, regarding her venerable adorer with an ineffable smile of mockery; "are you going to be jealous of the king now?"

"I ought, perhaps," grumbled the old soldier.

"Ah, take care!" said the duchess, not able to resist

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the temptation of alluding to the proverbial avarice of Montmorency; "it would be a sort of jealousy that would entail a loss to you of two hundred per cent, and it is not your habit to place so high a figure on —" She was about to say, "Your love," but she checked herself just as the words were on the tip of her tongue.

"On what?" asked the constable.

"On your money," said the duchess.

At this moment the king entered.

"Oh, sire," cried Diane, rushing towards him, "you have come, then! It is well, for I was on the point of sending for you. Our dear constable has arrived, as you see, as young and as proud as Mars still."

"Yes," said the king, employing the mythological language of the time, "and his first visit has been to Venus; I do not say: 'To every lord his due honour; but to all beauty its due royalty.' — Your hand, my dear constable."

"*Mordieu!* sire," said Montmorency, crossly, and with a scowl on his face, "I do not know whether I ought to give you my hand."

"Indeed! and why so?" asked the king, smiling.

"Well," answered the constable, scowling more and more, "it looks as if you had somewhat forgotten me yonder."

"Forgotten you, my dear constable?" cried the king, placed on the defensive, though he had such very good reasons for taking the offensive.

"Oh, I know! M. de Guise has been sounding his trumpet in your ears!"

"Faith!" retorted Henri, who could not refrain from responding by a home thrust to the feint of Montmorency, "you can hardly prevent a conqueror from sounding his trumpet."

"Sire," returned Montmorency, rising like a fighting cock on his spurs, "some defeats are as illustrious as victories!"

"Yes," said the king, "but hardly as profitable, you must admit."

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"Hardly as profitable, — hardly as profitable," snarled the constable; "very true! But war is a game in which the ablest may lose the stakes: the king, your father, knew something about that!"

Henri blushed slightly.

"And as to the city of Saint-Quentin," continued the constable, "it seems to me that if it has surrendered —"

"In the first place," interrupted Henri, "the city of Saint-Quentin has not surrendered; the city of Saint-Quentin has been taken, and taken after a heroic defence, as you know! The city of Saint-Quentin has saved France, which —"

Henri hesitated.

"Yes, finish; which the battle of Saint-Laurent had destroyed: is not that what you were about to say? That is what you mean, is it not? Yes, yes; get yourself bruised and wounded and imprisoned for the sake of a king, and then see what a sweet compliment the king will pay you in return for all!"

"No, my dear constable," said Henri, whom a look of Diane had reduced to repentance, — "no, I do not say so; quite the contrary. I only said that Saint-Quentin has made an admirable defence."

"Ah, indeed! for all that, your Majesty has nicely treated its defender!"

"Coligny? What could I do more, my dear constable, than pay his ransom as well as yours?"

"Let us not talk of that, sire. Just as if I was thinking of the ransom of Coligny! no, I am referring to the imprisonment of Dandelot."

"Ah! excuse me, my dear constable," returned the king; "but M. Dandelot is a heretic!"

"As if we were not all affected in that way, more or less. Perhaps, sire, you presume to think you may go to Paradise yourself?"

"Why not?"

"Stuff! you will go there in the same fashion as old

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Marshal Strozzi, who died a renegade. Ask your friend M. de Vieilleville what were his last words."

"What were they?"

"They were, 'I deny God; my holiday is over!' And when M. de Guise replied, 'Take care, marshal! you are about to appear in the presence of Him whom you deny!' —'All right!' answered the dying man, snapping his fingers; 'I shall be to-day where all who have died for the last six thousand years are!'—Well, sire, why do you not have his body disinterred and burned on the Gréve? You have a stronger reason for doing so than in ordinary cases. This man died for you; the others have only been wounded."

"Constable," said the king, "you are unjust!"

"Unjust? Pshaw! where is M. Dandelot, then? Inspecting the cavalry, as his duty enjoins, or resting in his château after that famous siege of Saint-Quentin, during which, as you acknowledge yourself, he has wrought miracles? No! he is in prison in the château of Melun; and why? Because he has told you frankly his opinion about the Mass! Oh, *mordieu!* sire, I don't know what keeps me from turning Huguenot and offering my sword to M. de Condé!"

"Constable!"

"And when I think that my poor dear Dandelot probably owes his imprisonment to M. de Guise—"

"Constable, I swear to you that neither of the Guises had anything at all to do with the matter."

"What! you mean to tell me that this is not a plot of your damned cardinal?"

"Constable, you desire one thing, do you not?" said the king, eluding the question.

"What?"

"It is the release of M. Dandelot, is it not, in honour of your return, and to show how much we rejoice at having you here again?"

"*Mille diables!*" cried the constable, "I should think I desire it! It is not only my desire; it is my will!"

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"My cousin," objected the king, with a smile, "you know the king himself says, 'It is our will!'"

"Well, then, sire," said Diane, "say: 'It is our will that our good servant Dandelot be set at liberty, in order that he may be present at the marriage of our well-beloved daughter Diane de Castro to François de Montmorency, Comte de Damville.'"

"Yes," said the constable, still grumbling; "if, nevertheless, this marriage takes place —"

"And why should it not take place?" asked Diane. "Do you consider the couple too poor to set up housekeeping?"

"Oh! if it is only that," said the king, always enchanted at getting out of a difficulty by the expenditure of money, "we 'll find a hundred thousand crowns for them somewhere in the treasury chest of our domains."

"That is not the question, by any manner of means!" said the constable. "*Mille diables!* who is talking here of money? I have my doubts about the marriage for quite a different reason."

"And for what, pray?" asked the king.

"Well, because the marriage is disagreeable to your good friends, the Guises."

"In truth, constable, you are fighting against phantoms."

"Against phantoms! And what reason brings Duc François de Guise to Paris except to oppose a marriage that may add new lustre to my house, — although, for that matter," added Montmorency, insolently, "Madame de Castro is but a bastard."

The king bit his lips; Diane blushed; but Henri, not wishing to appear to notice the last phrase, said, —

"In the first place, my dear constable, you are mistaken: M. de Guise is not in Paris."

"Where is he, then?"

"In the camp at Compiègne."

"And you mean to tell me you have not given him leave of absence?"

"Leave of absence for what?"

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"To come to Paris!"

"I have not given M. de Guise any leave."

"Then, sire, M. de Guise has come to Paris without leave, that 's all."

"You are mad, constable! M. de Guise knows too well what he owes to me to quit the camp without my permission."

"The fact is, sire, that the duke owes you much, — owes you a very great deal, indeed; but he has forgotten what he owed you."

"But are you quite sure, constable," said Diane, also launching her dart, "that M. de Guise has committed — I don't quite know how to term it — what name is given to a breach of discipline? — has committed this impropriety?"

"Excuse me," said Montmorency; "I saw him."

"When?" asked the king.

"A few moments ago."

"Where?"

"At the gates of the Louvre. It was there we met."

"And pray how is it I have not seen him?"

"Because, instead of turning to the right, he went to the left, and instead of visiting the apartments of the king he visited those of the queen."

"You say M. de Guise is with the queen."

"Oh, don't let your Majesty be alarmed," said the constable; "I am willing to wager that he is not the only one with her, and that M. le Cardinal is a good third."

"Ah!" cried the king, "that is what we are about to see. Wait for me here, constable; I shall not be gone a moment."

The king left, furious, while Montmorency and Diane exchanged a look of vengeance, and Mary and François, who had heard nothing, a kiss of love.

Now this was why Henri II. had appeared on the threshold of Queen Catherine's apartment with gloomy face and wrinkled forehead.

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V.

IN WHICH AFTER THE VANQUISHED HAS BEEN TREATED LIKE THE VICTOR, THE VICTOR IS TREATED LIKE THE VANQUISHED.

THE attitude of our three characters was entirely different, and gave a correct idea of the state of their minds.

Queen Catherine was near the private door, with her back against the tapestry, and her hand, which held the key, behind her; her face was somewhat pale; a thrill ran through her whole body, for ambition has its mysterious emotions that resemble those of love.

The cardinal, dressed in a costume half military, half ecclesiastical, was near a table covered with papers and trinkets; his closed hand rested firmly on the table, and served him as a support.

Duc François stood far away from both, facing the door; he looked like a champion holding the lists against all comers and ready to meet all blows. His costume was almost military, — the only parts of his armour wanting were the helmet and cuirass; with his long boots all covered with mud, with his great sword clinging to his side, like some inflexible and faithful friend, he had that aspect he knew so well how to assume on the field of battle when waves of enemies broke against the breast of his horse, as the tumultuous waves of ocean break against some sharp-pointed rock. Having uncovered in presence of the royal majesty, he held in his hand his felt hat shaded by a cherry-coloured plume; but his lofty figure, straight and rigid as that of an oak, did not vary a particle from its upright posture before the king.

Henri was about to come in collision with that commanding dignity of demeanour which made a certain great lady

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of the period say that, when in presence of the Duc de Guise, all other gentlemen became common.

He stopped, as the pebble that strikes the wall stops, as the lead that strikes the iron.

"Ah! it is you, my cousin," said he. "I am astonished to find you here; I believed you were in command of the camp at Compiègne."

"Exactly like myself, sire," he answered: "no one could have been more surprised than I was to meet M. de Montmorency at the gates of the Louvre; I believed him a prisoner in Antwerp."

Henri bit his lips at this stern reply.

"It is true he is returned, monsieur," said he; "but I have paid his ransom, and for two hundred thousand crowns I have had the pleasure of seeing an old servant and a faithful friend again."

"Does your Majesty estimate at the value of only two hundred thousand crowns the cities you are surrendering, as I am assured, to England, Spain, and Piedmont? As you are surrendering very nearly two hundred, that would make only a thousand crowns a city."

"I restore those cities, monsieur, not to ransom M. de Montmorency, but to purchase peace."

"I had believed until now that — in France, at least — peace was purchased by victories."

"It is because, being a Lorraine prince, monsieur, you know the history of France badly. Have you forgotten, among others, the treaties of Brétigny and Madrid?"

"No, sire; but I did not believe there was identity or even resemblance between the situations. After the battle of Poitiers, King John was a prisoner in London; after the battle of Pavia, King François I. was a prisoner in Toledo. To-day, King Henri II., at the head of a magnificent army, is the all-powerful tenant of the Louvre. Why, then, renew, in full prosperity, the disasters of the fatal epochs of France?"

"M. de Guise," said the king, haughtily, "have you

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calculated the rights I gave you when I named you Lieutenant-General of the realm?"

"Yes, sire. After the disastrous battle of Saint-Laurent, after the heroic defence of Saint-Quentin, when the enemy was at Noyon; when M. de Nevers had only two or three hundred gentlemen around him; when affrighted Paris was flying through her broken barriers; when the king, from the highest tower of the château of Compiègne, was examining the Picardy road, determined to be the last to retire before the enemy, — not like a king who must not expose himself to danger, but like a general, a captain, a soldier who guards a retreat, — you called me, sire, and named me Lieutenant of your realm. My right from that moment was to save France, which M. de Montmorency had ruined. What have I done, sire? I have brought back to France the Army of Italy; I have delivered Bourg; I have torn the keys of your kingdom from the girdle of Queen Mary Tudor by recovering Calais; I have regained Guines, Ham, and Thionville; I have surprised Arlon, repaired the disasters of Gravelines, and after a furious war, have collected in the camp of Compiègne an army twice as numerous as it was at the time I took command. Was that one of my rights sire?"

"Undoubtedly, undoubtedly," stammered Henri, embarrassed.

"Then your Majesty must permit me to say that I do not at all understand the question you have just addressed to me, 'Have you calculated the rights I gave you when I named you Lieutenant-General of the realm?'"

"I meant, M. le Duc, that among the rights which a king gives to one of his subjects, the right of remonstrance is rarely comprised."

"In the first place," replied Duc François, with an inclination so slight and an affectation of courtesy so careless that it became impertinent, "I would take the liberty of drawing your Majesty's attention to the fact that I have not precisely the honour of being your subject; after the

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death of Duke Albert, the Emperor Henri III. gave the duchy of Upper Lorraine to Gerald of Alsace, first hereditary duke and founder of our house. I received this duchy from my father, and he from his. By the grace of God, what I received from my father I shall leave to my son. If great things may be compared with small, it is what you do, sire, with the kingdom of France."

"Do you know, cousin," said Henri, wishing to give the conversation an ironical turn, "that what you have said inspires me with a certain fear?"

"Fear of what, sire?" asked the duke.

"Fear that France may one day have a war with Lorraine."

The duke bit his lips.

"Sire," he replied, "the fear is more than improbable; but if such a thing should happen, and, as a sovereign prince, I was forced to defend my patrimony against your Majesty, I swear to you it would be only on the breach of my last fortress that I should sign a treaty as disastrous as that to which you have consented."

"M. le Duc!" exclaimed Henri, throwing back his head and raising his voice.

"Sire," replied M. de Guise, "let me tell you what I think and what all of us think who belong to the *noblesse*. The authority of a constable is such, it is claimed, that in a case of extreme necessity, he may pledge a third of the kingdom. Well, without other necessity than that of leaving a prison of which he is tired, M. le Connétable costs you more than a third of your realm, sire. Yes, of your realm, — for I consider as of your realm all that conquered land of Piedmont which has cost the crown of France more than forty millions of gold, and the soil of France more than a hundred thousand of its children; for I consider of your realm those fine parliaments of Turin and Chambéry which, as well as many others, the late king, your lord and father, instituted there after the French manner; for I consider as of your realm all those fair Transalpine cities

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in which so many of your subjects had established their households and taken such root that gradually the inhabitants were abandoning their corrupted Italian, and speaking as good French as is spoken in Lyons or Tours."

"Well," asked Henri, embarrassed at having to answer such arguments, "for whom do I abandon all this? For my father's daughter, for my sister Marguerite."

"No, sire; you abandon it for Duke Emmanuel Philibert, her husband, your most cruel enemy, your most inveterate antagonist. Once married, the Princess Marguerite is no longer the daughter of the king your father; the Princess Marguerite is no longer your sister; the Princess Marguerite is Duchess of Savoy. Now, do you wish me to tell you what will happen, sire? This is what will happen: the Duke of Savoy will no sooner be restored to his dominions than he will tear up all your father has planted there; and this he will do so effectively that all the glory acquired by France in Italy during the last twenty-six or thirty years will be completely extinguished, and you may abandon for ever the hope of conquering the duchy of Milan. And yet it is not that which disturbs my mind and afflicts my soul most; it is the fact that you offer such advantages to the lieutenant-general of King Philip, to the representative of that Spanish house which is our most fatal enemy. Just think of it, sire! by means of the Alps, all the passes of which Emmanuel Philibert holds, Spain is at the gates of Lyons! — Lyons, which, before this peace, was in the centre of your kingdom, and which to-day is a frontier city."

"Oh, with regard to that matter," replied Henri, "you have no reason at all to be disturbed, cousin. Duke Emmanuel Philibert, in virtue of an arrangement made between us, passes from the Spanish service into ours. Should M. le Connétable die, his sword is promised to the Duke of Savoy."

"And doubtless that is why," replied François de Guise, bitterly, "Duke Emmanuel Philibert took it from him in advance at Saint-Quentin?"

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Then as the king made an impatient gesture, —

"Pardon me, sire," continued the duke; "I am wrong, and such questions ought to be treated more seriously. So Duke Emmanuel Philibert is to succeed M. de Montmorency? So M. de Savoie is to hold in his hands the *fleur-de-lis* sword? Well, sire, take care that on the day you place that sword in his possession he does not use it as the Count of Saint-Paul did, who, like the Duke of Savoy, was also a foreigner, being of the house of Luxembourg. King Louis XI. and the Duke of Burgundy also made a peace one fine day, as you wish to do, or have already done, with the King of Spain; one of the conditions of this peace was that the Count of Saint-Paul should be Constable of France, and he was; but he was hardly constable when he began to treacherously support the Duke of Burgundy, his first master, and marched on from treason to treason, as may be read in the 'Memoirs of Philippe de Comines.'"

"Good!" replied Henri; "since you refer me to the 'Memoirs of Philippe de Comines,' I am willing to base my answer on these Memoirs. What was the result of all the treasons of Saint-Paul? that he lost his head, was it not? Well, listen to this, cousin, on the first treason of Duke Emmanuel, I swear to you, — and you hear this from my own lips, — that he shall be dealt with exactly as was the Constable of Saint-Paul by my predecessor Louis XI. But, thank God! no such necessity will arise," continued the king. "Duke Emmanuel Philibert, far from forgetting what he owes us, will always have before his eyes the position we have made for him. Besides, we retain the marquisate of Saluces in the midst of his territories, as a mark of honour for the crown of France, and in order that the Duke of Savoy, his children and his posterity, may never forget that our kings formerly conquered and possessed all Piedmont and Savoy, but that, in favour of a daughter of France who married into their house, all these conquests and possessions on both sides of the moun-

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tains were restored, or rather made over as a gift, to the said house, to render it, by this boundless liberality, more obedient and devoted to the crown of France."

Then as the king saw that M. de Guise did not seem to set a very high value on this marquisate of Saluces reserved to the crown of France, he added: —

"Moreover, if you will have the goodness to reflect on the matter, you must see as well as I that the seizure of the territories of the poor prince who was father of the present Duke of Savoy was a very tyrannical usurpation on the part of the late king, my lord and father; for he really had not any right at all on his side, and to banish a son in this way from the duchy of his father and strip him of everything, was surely not acting as a good Christian; and though I had no other motive than that of relieving the soul of the king my father from such a sin, I would restore to Emmanuel Philibert what belongs to him."

The duke bowed.

"Well," asked Henri, "you do not answer, M. de Guise?"

"Yes, sire. But since the excitement of your Majesty has led you to accuse even the king your father of tyranny, it is no longer, — I who esteem King François I. a great king and not a tyrant, — it is no longer to King Henri II., it is to King François I. that I have to render an account of my conduct. Just as you have judged your father, sire, your father shall judge me; and as I believe the judgment of the dead more infallible than the judgment of the living, being condemned by the living, I appeal to the dead."

Thereupon, approaching that fine portrait of François I. by Titian which is to-day one of the glories of the Museum of the Louvre, but which then was the chief ornament of the room in which this discussion took place, and which we have just related, with the object of proving to our readers that it was not the edge of the sword, but the fascinating graces of a woman which led to the signing of the fatal treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, —

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"O King François!" said the duke, "you who were armed by Bayard, and called the Knightly King, — a title that contained all the glorious characteristics of the kings your predecessors, — you loved sieges and battles too much during your life, and were too much attached to your fair realm of France not to view from on high what is passing amongst us! You know what I have done and what I wished to do still; but I am arrested in my career, O my king! and they prefer a peace, the signing of which costs us more than would thirty years of reverses! The sword of a lieutenant-general of the kingdom is, then, useless; and as I do not wish it to be said that such a peace was consented to as long as the Duc de Guise had his sword by his side, I, François de Lorraine, who never yet surrendered his sword, surrender it now to you, my king, the first for whom I have drawn it, and who knows its value!"

At these words, the duke loosened the sword from his belt, hung it up as a trophy on the frame of the picture, bowed and went from the room, leaving the King of France furious, the cardinal utterly depressed, and Catherine triumphant.

In fact, the vindictive Florentine saw but one thing in all this; it was the insult offered by François de Guise to Madame de Valentinois, her rival, and to the constable. her enemy.

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VI.

THE PEDDLER.

Between these two ambitious groups, making the dignity of the king or the greatness of France the pretext of their mutual hostility, but really only caring for the success of their own houses and devoting all their energies to the destruction of the houses of their rivals, rose a third group altogether poetic, artistic, and devoted to the true, the beautiful, and the good; this group was composed of the young Princess Élisabeth, daughter of Henri II., Diane d'Angouleme, Duchesse de Castro, widow of Horace Farnese, the young husband and wife we lately saw in the apartment of Madame de Valentinois, and finally, Madame Marguerite of France, daughter of François I. just affianced to Emmanuel Philibert by the peace; her gracious and serene figure was the principal feature in the scene.

Around these charming faces, like butterflies around a bed of flowers, flitted all the poets of the time: Ronsard, Du Bellay, Godelle, Daurat, and Remy Belleau, as well as a few men graver than they, but not less lettered, such as good old Amyot, translator of Plutarch and preceptor to Prince Charles, and Chancellor de l'Hôpital, private secretary of Madame Marguerite.

These were the favoured friends of those royal dames; they had what was afterwards called, under Louis XIV., "the great and little entries." At any hour of the day they might call on Madame Marguerite, their protectress; but their reception was of a more marked and intimate character between one and two in the afternoon, after dinner.

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The news of peace, which was becoming more and more positive, — indeed, it was announced that its preliminaries were already signed, — had, in its flight, dropped from its great white wings tears for some of those whom we have just presented to our readers, and smiles for others.

It may be easily guessed that Mary Stuart and François II. had little to do with this distribution of sadness and joy; destiny had already allotted to them their portion, and we have seen that neither complained of it.

Nor did the beautiful widow of Alexander Farnese complain either; she was marrying a fine and noble gentleman a little over thirty, rich, and the bearer of a great name. The only mystery, therefore, that lay in the future was how far harmony of tastes or opposition of character might affect the happiness of herself and her husband.

Princess Marguerite was, however, the one on whom that fair goddess whom men call Peace had bestowed the choicest of her gifts. We know that, ever since her visit to Nice, the memory of a young prince, twelve or fourteen years old, had dwelt in her heart; and now after sixteen years of disenchantment, of obstacles and even impossibilities, the dream of her heart had suddenly become a reality, the phantom had taken form, and hope was transformed into certain happiness.

One of the conditions of this peace, now on the brink of being signed, if not signed already, was her marriage with that little prince of Savoy, who, under the name of Emmanuel Philibert, had become one of the first captains of his age. And so, we repeat, Madame Marguerite was very happy.

Alas! this was not the case with poor Élisabeth! Betrothed at first to the young prince Don Carlos, who had sent her his portrait and received hers in return, the unexpected death of Mary Tudor suddenly prostrated the scaffolding of her happiness, which she had believed beyond the reach of peril. Philip, having been rejected by Elizabeth of England, to whom he proposed after the decease

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of Mary, had cast his eyes on Élisabeth of France, and in the conditions of the treaty of peace, two words only had to be changed, which two words were to result in the unhappiness of two persons, and even of three.

Instead of the words, "*Prince Carlos* will marry the Princess Élisabeth of France," were written these others, "*King Philip* will marry the Princess Élisabeth of France."

Now, it is easy to understand what a terrible blow these two words inflicted on the heart of the poor princess, who, without being consulted on the matter, was thus compelled to change her betrothed. At fifteen, instead of marrying a handsome, chivalrous, and amorous prince of sixteen, she was forced to marry a king, young still, but old before his time, gloomy, distrustful, and fanatic, who would hem her round with the laws of Spanish etiquette, the most severe of all laws of etiquette, and who, instead of tournaments, festivals, and spectacles, would amuse her from time to time with the horrible exhibition of an *auto-da-fé*.

The different personages we have enumerated had, according to their custom, met after dinner, that is to say, between one and two, in the apartment of Madame Marguerite, each musing on her own joys or sorrows, — Madame Marguerite near a half-open window, through which glided a pale sunbeam that seemed to be warming itself in the gold of her hair; Élisabeth kneeling at her feet, with her head on her knees; Diane de Castro, in a big armchair, reading the poems of Maître Ronsard; and Mary Stuart playing, on the spinet, that venerable grandmother of the clavichord and ancestress of the piano, an Italian melody to which she had adapted words of her own composition.

Suddenly Madame Marguerite, whose blue eyes were apparently searching for a patch of azure in the skies that would remind them of their native country, started out of the vague reverie into which she had fallen, and, deigning to lower to earth her goddess-like gaze, seemed to be lending some attention to a scene that was passing in a court

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connected by a wicket, or rather postern, with that tongue of land which then sloped down to the Seine, and which we at present call improperly the quay, not knowing what other name to give it.

"What is the matter?" asked Madame Marguerite, in that charming voice which all the poets of the time have sung, and which took even softer tones when she spoke to her inferiors than when she spoke to her equals.

Another voice answered from below, as she leaned out of the window; but it did not reach the ears of the four others, each absorbed in their different thoughts, who were in the interior of the apartment.

However, while playing the last note of the melody she had just been singing, Mary Stuart turned towards Marguerite, as if to ask the meaning of this vertical dialogue, of which she had heard only the few words uttered by the princess.

"My dear little queen," said Marguerite, answering this mute inquiry, "you must request my well-beloved nephew the dauphin to pardon the great impropriety I have just been guilty of."

"Oh, fair aunt!" said François before Mary Stuart could utter a word, "we know your improprieties always turn out charming fancies. So you are pardoned beforehand, supposing we have the right of reprimand or pardon."

"Pray, what have you done, madame?" inquired Diane de Castro, raising her eyes from her book with a languor that showed her memories and hopes had but little connection with what she was reading.

"I have authorised two Italian peddlers, who were unwilling, they said, to unpack their treasures except in our presence, to be introduced. One, it appears, sells jewels, and the other stuffs."

"Oh," cried Mary, clapping her hands like a child, "how well you have acted, dear aunt! The jewels that come from Florence and the stuffs from Venice are so beautiful!"

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"What if we were to bring Madame de Valentinois here?" said Diane de Castro, going to the door.

Princess Marguerite stopped her.

"Would it not be better, my fair Diane," said she, "to give a surprise to our dear duchess? Let us first select two or three objects and send them to her as a present, — that is, supposing these merchants to be as well supplied as they claim to be, — then we shall send her the merchants themselves."

"You are always right, madame," replied Diane, kissing the hand of the princess.

The latter turned to Élisabeth.

"And you, my dear child, can you not call up one little smile?"

"Why should I smile?" asked the young princess, showing her eyes bathed in tears.

"Just for the sake of those who love you, my child."

"I can smile when I think I am among those who love me; but I weep when I think how soon I must leave them."

"Nonsense, a little courage, sister!" said François. "What the mischief! King Philip is perhaps not as terrible as they say; then you have taken it into your head that he is an old man. He is nothing of the sort; he is just the same age as François de Montmorency, thirty-two, — and our sister Diane is far from complaining of the husband they are giving her, very far indeed."

Élisabeth sighed.

"I would make no complaint," she said, "if I had to marry one of the peddlers who are about to enter, but I do complain of having to marry King Philip."

"Oh!" said little Queen Mary, "the beautiful stuffs they are going to show us will delight your eyes; but, my darling sister, you must dry your tears or you cannot see them."

Then, approaching Élisabeth with her handkerchief, she first wiped her eyes, and then, hastily kissing her, exclaimed, —

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"Ah! I hear the merchants."

Élisabeth tried to smile.

"Should you find among their goods a piece of black stuff interwoven with silver threads, you will know beforehand that I want it for my wedding-dress, and will put it aside for me, will you not, my sisters?"

At that moment, the door opened, and two men appeared in the ante-chamber, dressed like peddlers, and each having on his back one of those immense boxes in which hawkers place their merchandise, and which they call their packs.

"Pardon me, your Highness," said the usher, addressing Princess Marguerite, "but perhaps the servants downstairs have misunderstood you."

"Misunderstood me? How?" asked Marguerite.

"Because they say you have permitted these two men to come upstairs."

"They say the truth," replied Marguerite.

"Then these men may enter?"

"Undoubtedly."

"Enter, good people," said the usher, turning to the two men, "and try to remember where you are!"

"Oh, don't bother yourself, my good man!" returned the peddler who seemed to be the younger of the pair, a handsome blond and red-cheeked youth, with red beard and moustaches, who spoke a Savoyard *patois;* "this is n't the first time we have spoken to princes and princesses."

"Good!" said François; "no need asking where they came from."

Then, in a whisper, —

"Aunt Marguerite, they are probably," said he, laughing, "ambassadors in disguise, come from the duke to find out whether he was deceived or not when he was told you were the most charming princess in the world."

"In any case," said Marguerite, "they are my future subjects, and you will not think badly of me for treating them as such."

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Upon which she turned towards them, saying, —

"Enter, my friends."

"Don't you hear yon lovely lady — God keep her! — inviting you to enter?" said the blond peddler with the red beard; and as if to give a good example to his companion, he entered at once.

Behind him came his comrade.

He was a man of about thirty or thirty-two years, vigorously built, and who had an air of singular distinction, notwithstanding the coarse and dusky appearance of his garments.

On perceiving him, the Princess Marguerite checked a cry that was just escaping from her lips, and her excitement, though momentary, was so apparent the blond peddler saw it.

"Oh, is anything the matter, my beautiful lady?" he asked, laying his pack on the floor. "Did your foot slip? for I was afraid you were going to fall."

"No," said Marguerite, smiling; "but when I saw the difficulty your comrade had in getting rid of his box, I was taking a step forward to aid him."

"That would be fine!" said the same speaker, who appeared to have taken all the burden of the conversation on his own shoulders; "it would be the first time a princess's hand touched a poor peddler's pack. You see the boy has been only a short time at the trade, and he 's still very awkward, — is n't what I 'm saying true, Beppo?"

"Are you an Italian, my friend?" asked Marguerite.

"*Si, signora*," replied the Italian with the black beard.

"And you come — ?"

"From Venice by way of Florence, Milan, and Turin. And when we reached Paris, we heard there would be grand festivals in the capital on the occasion of the peace and marriage of two illustrious princesses, and so my comrade and I said to ourselves that if we could only get near their Royal Highnesses our fortune would be made."

"Ha! you see when he patters the gibberish of his

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own country, he can jabber almost as fast as myself," said the comrade.

"Indeed," said the brown peddler, "I have been told there are two or three princesses here who speak Italian like their native tongue."

Marguerite smiled; she appeared to take extreme pleasure in the conversation of this man, in whose mouth the Piedmont *patois* — that is to say, the language of the peasants — was impregnated with perfect elegance.

"Yes, my dear little niece Mary," she said, "speaks all languages, and particularly the language of Dante, Ariosto, and Tasso. Come here, Mary, and ask this worthy man news of the fair country where, as the poet of the 'Inferno' says, the *si* resounds."

"And can't I," said the blond peddler, "find any lovely princess to speak Savoyard with me?"

"You may find me," said Marguerite.

"You speak Savoyard? No; that cannot be true."

"I do not speak it, but I wish to learn it," said Marguerite.

"Ah, you 're right; it is a fine language."

"But," said Queen Mary, in the purest Tuscan ever spoken from Pisa to Arezzo, "you promised us wonders, and, although we are princesses, we are women. Do not make us wait too long."

"Oh!" said François, "it is easy to see you don't know much about these babblers who come from the other side of the Alps. To hear them talk, you would fancy they carried the seven wonders of the world on their back; but when they open their packs, you find nothing in them but rings of rock crystal, filigree diadems, and Roman pearls. You had better make haste, friend; if you don't, you may fare badly, for the longer you make us wait, the harder it will be to please us."

"What is the signor prince saying?" asked the brown peddler, as if he had not understood.

Marguerite translated the words of the young dauphin,

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softening such of them as might sound a little harsh in the ears of the brown peddler, whom, because he happened to be a Piedmontese, she seemed to have taken under her protection.

"I am waiting," replied the peddler, "until the fair young lady who is in the balcony, and looks so sad, comes here also. I have always known that precious stones possess a powerful magic for drying the tears in beautiful eyes, however bitter those tears may be."

"You are listening, my dear Élisabeth?" said Marguerite. "Come, rise at once, and take example by your sister Diane, who is already gloating over the jewels the box contains, through the lid!"

Élisabeth came carelessly, and rested her pale and languishing head on the shoulder of her brother.

"And now," said François, bantering, "shut your eyes at once, so that they may not be dazzled at what they 're going to see."

As if he had only waited for the invitation, the brown peddler opened his box; and, just as the dauphin had said, the women, accustomed though they were to precious stones and rich jewels, started back dazzled, uttering cries of delight and admiration.

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VII.

WEDDING GOWNS AND JEWELS.

In fact, it looked as if some one of the genii of the earth had opened before the princesses the entrance to a mine of Golconda or Visapour, so brightly did the four shelves arranged on the sides of the box blaze with the flame of diamonds, the blue, red, and green lightnings of sapphires, rubies, and emeralds, amid which pearls of all sizes and shapes cast the strange sheen of their wan purity.

The princesses looked at one another astounded, asking with their eyes whether they were rich enough to pay for these gems offered them by a simple Italian peddler.

"Well," asked Mary Stuart of the dauphin, "what do you say to that, François?"

"I?" said the young prince, dazzled in his turn. "I say nothing: I admire!"

The peddler with the black beard seemed not to understand him; and, as if he had guessed what had been said at the moment he entered, with respect to the Duchesse de Valentinois, as if he knew all the influence exercised over this princely and royal world by the beautiful Diane de Poitiers, —

"Let us begin," said he, "by thinking of the absent; it is a pious act which cannot offend those who are present, and for which those who are away will be grateful."

At these words the peddler plunged his hand in the box of wonders, and drew forth a diadem, which, when exposed to the light of day, forced a cry of astonishment from the spectators.

"This," said he, "is a very simple diadem; but, notwithstanding its simplicity, thanks to the hand of the

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illustrious jeweller who chiselled it, it does not seem to me unworthy of the person for whom it is intended. It is, as you see, a triple crescent, enlaced as a true lover's knot; in the opening, the shepherd Endymion is lying asleep, and there, in her mother-of-pearl chariot, with diamond wheels, the goddess Diana is coming to visit him in his sleep. Is not one of the illustrious princesses before me named Diane de Castro?"

Diane, forgetting that the speaker was a mere tradesman, advanced with as much eagerness, and, we will say, with as much politeness, as if he were a prince, so much does the sight of a work of art, a precious jewel, anything having a princely value, make a prince of its possessor.

"I am so named, my friend," she said.

"Well, most illustrious princess," replied the peddler, bowing, "this diadem was made by Benvenuto Cellini by the order of Cosmo I. of Florence: it was for sale; I purchased it, hoping to dispose of it advantageously at the court of France, where I knew I should find two Dianes instead of one. Do you not think it would marvellously become the marble brow of Madame de Valentinois?"

Diane de Castro uttered a little cry of delight.

"My mother! my dear mother!" she exclaimed, "how pleased she will be!"

"Diane," said the dauphin, "tell her it is a present from her children, François and Mary."

"Since monseigneur has pronounced these two illustrious names," returned the peddler, "would he deign to allow me to place under his eyes a certain article which, in my desire to be agreeable to those who bear them, I had already intended to submit to their inspection? This, monseigneur, is a reliquary of pure gold, which belonged to Leo X., and, instead of ordinary relics, contains a portion of the true cross. The design was by Michael Angelo, and it was executed by Nicolas Braschi of Ferrara. The ruby, which is enchased above the hollow destined to receive the

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sacred host, was brought from India by the famous traveller, Marco Polo. This splendid jewel was — you will excuse me, monseigneur — destined, in my own mind, for the young, beautiful, and illustrious Queen Mary Stuart; it will incessantly recall to her, in that land of heretics over which she is one day to rule, that there is no faith but the Catholic faith, and that it is better to die for that faith, like the Man-God, a piece of whose precious cross is enclosed in this reliquary, than to deny it for the sake of wearing the triple crown of Scotland, Ireland, and England."

Mary had already stretched out her hands to receive this magnificent heritage of the papacy, when François, hesitating, stopped her.

"We must take care, Mary!" he said; "this reliquary will cost a king's ransom."

A smile gleamed faintly on the rather mocking lips of the peddler; perhaps he was thinking, "The ransom of a king is not dear, when like your grandfather, François I., one does not pay it;" but he was careful to refrain from uttering his thought, and said, —

"I purchased it on credit, monseigneur; and, as I have full confidence in the buyer, I am willing to sell it on credit also."

And the reliquary passed from the hands of the hawker into those of Mary Stuart, who placed it on a table, and knelt before it, not to say her prayers, but to admire it at her ease.

François, the shadow of this charming body, was hastening to her side, when the peddler called him back, saying, —

"Excuse me, monseigneur, but I have something here which may suit you. Do me the favour to cast your eyes on this weapon."

"Oh, what a splendid poniard!" exclaimed François, snatching the dagger from the hands of the peddler, as Achilles did the sword from the hands of Ulysses.

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"Is it not, monseigneur, a marvellous piece of work? It is a poniard intended for Lorenzo de Médicis, a peaceful prince, whom people sometimes wished to kill, but who himself never killed anybody. It was wrought by the goldsmith Ghirlandajo, whose shop is on the Ponte-Vecchio at Florence. It is said this part" (and the peddler pointed to the hilt) "was modelled by Michael Angelo when he was fifteen years old. Lorenzo died before the poniard was finished. For sixty-seven years, it remained the property of the descendants of Ghirlandajo; they were in want of money at the time I happened to be passing through Florence. I bought this marvel for the price of a bit of bread, and I shall only charge you my travelling expenses in addition, monseigneur. Take it, then, in all confidence; such a trifle will not ruin the Dauphin of France."

The young prince uttered a cry of joy, drew the poniard from the sheath, and, to determine whether the blade was as good as the hilt and scabbard, he laid a piece of gold on the oak table at which Mary was kneeling, and, with one blow, dealt with a force hardly to be expected from so frail a hand, he pierced the piece of gold through.

"Ha!" he exclaimed joyously, pointing to the gold-piece, through which the point of the dagger appeared; "could you do as much?"

"Monseigneur," replied the merchant, humbly, "I am a poor peddler, badly trained in the sports of princes and captains: I sell poniards; I do not use them."

"Oh!" said François, "you look to me like a lad that, upon occasion, could play with sword and dagger as well as any one in the world! Try to do, then, as well as I have done, and if, through want of address, you break the blade, the loss will be put down to my account."

The peddler smiled. "If you absolutely insist, monseigneur," said he, "I shall try."

"Good!" said Francois, searching for a second gold crown in his pocket.

But, during this time, the peddler had drawn, from the

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little leather purse hanging at his belt, a Spanish quadruple three times thicker than the rose noble on the table that François had pierced.

Then, without an effort, and as if he had merely raised and dropped his arm, he reproduced the experiment of the young prince, but with a very different result; for, after piercing the gold as if it were paper, the blade went a depth of two inches into the oak table, piercing it through and through, just as the dauphin had the coin.

Moreover, the blow drove it through the exact centre of the quadruple, just as if this centre had been measured by a compass.

The peddler let the young prince draw, as he could, the poniard from the table, and returned to his jewels.

"And have you nothing for me, my friend?" asked the widow of Alexander Farnese.

"Excuse me, madame," replied the peddler; "here is an Arabian bracelet of great richness and surpassing originality; it was taken from the treasury of the harem in Tunis, when Charles V., of glorious memory, entered that city triumphantly, in 1535. I bought it from an old *condottiere* who followed the emperor in that campaign, and put it aside specially for your inspection; if you do not like it, you can choose something else. Thank God! you see we are not yet at the end of our treasures."

And, in fact, the amazed eyes of the young widow were able to see, as in a brilliant abyss, the marvels that still remained at the bottom of the peddler's chest.

But the bracelet, as the merchant had said, was at once too original and too rich not to satisfy the desire of Diane de Castro, however fantastic it might be. The fair widow, therefore, took the bracelet, and appeared only to have one anxiety; namely, as to whether it would be possible to pay for such a magnificent acquisition.

Remained Princess Élisabeth and Princess Marguerite: Princess Élisabeth, who awaited her share in the peddler's wares with the melancholy of indifference, and Princess

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Marguerite, who awaited hers with the calmness of conviction.

"Madame," said the peddler, to the betrothed of King Philip, "although I have laid something aside to be presented your Royal Highness, would it please you better to make a selection yourself among these jewels? Your heart appears to care so little for all these trifles that I fear I may not have chosen according to your taste, and I should prefer if you would choose for yourself."

Élisabeth seemed to awaken from a deep reverie.

"What?" she said, — "what do you ask of me? What do you desire?"

Thereupon, Marguerite, taking from the hands of the peddler a magnificent necklace of pearls, fastened by a single diamond as big as a nut, and worth a million francs, said to her, —

"My dear little niece, we are desirous for you to try this necklace, in order to get an idea how it becomes your neck, or rather how your neck becomes it."

And she fastened the necklace round the neck of Élisabeth, pushing her in front of a small Venetian mirror, so that she might be able to judge herself of the lustre which the pearls cast on her neck, or of the wrong which her neck did to the pearls.

But she, always absorbed in her grief, passed, unheeding, in front of the mirror, and, without pausing, went and sat down in the place near the window which she occupied when the peddler entered.

Marguerite looked sadly after her, and, on turning round, perceived that the eyes of the peddler took the same direction as hers, and expressed a sadness not less real.

"Alas!" she murmured, "all the pearls of the Orient will never dispel the gloom of that brow!"

Then, coming back to the peddler, and, as it were, lifting the veil of melancholy which covered her face, —

"So I," said she, "am, apparently, the only one forgotten?"

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"Madame," said the peddler, "chance, or rather my good fortune, decided that I should meet Prince Emmanuel Philibert on my route. As I am a native of Piedmont, and therefore his subject, I told him the object of my journey, and my ambition to be introduced to your Royal Highness. Then, in the hope that I might reach my aim, he placed in my hands, charging me to lay it at your feet, this girdle offered by his father, Charles III., to his mother, Beatrix of Portugal, on the day of their marriage. It is, as you see, a serpent of gold enamelled in blue; its mouth holds a chatelaine, from which hang five keys of the same metal; these keys are the keys of Turin, Chambéry, Nice, Verceil, and Villeneuve-d'Asti, emblazoned with the arms of these cities, which are the *fleurons* of your crown; each of them opens an *armoire* in the palace of Turin, which you shall yourself open on the day of your entrance into that palace as sovereign Duchess of Piedmont. After this girdle, what could I present to you that would be worthy of your acceptance? Nothing, madame, except, it might be, some rich stuffs which my companion will have the honour of showing you."

Then the second peddler opened his box, and unrolled before the wondering eyes of the princesses a dazzling collection of those magnificent scarfs of Algiers, Tunis, and Smyrna that seem embroidered with the sunbeams of Turkey and Africa; an assortment of those rich stuffs, with brocade flowers of gold and silver, which Paul Veronese throws over the shoulders of his doges and duchesses, and whose sumptuous folds, after lapping their bodies, used to sweep the steps of the palaces and churches behind them; finally, a selection of long pieces of satin which, after travelling from the east to the west, halted at this epoch for a time at Venice, and then were sent forward to dazzle the eyes of the fair dames of Antwerp, Brussels, and Ghent. From these three centres, as from a triple caravansary, they set out again, bearing to England, France, and Spain a marvellous sample of the patience of Hindoo and Chinese,

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whose needles had traced on each of them, in colours more brilliant than those of Nature herself, a whole universe of fantastic birds, unknown flowers, and impossible chimeras!

The princesses divided these treasures among them with that feverish briskness which seizes on every woman, whatever be her rank, at sight of those objects of adornment, that must, her love of admiration tells her, enhance the charms she has already received from Nature; and at the end of a quarter of an hour the blond peddler had quite as large an account to be settled for his stuffs as the brown peddler had for his precious stones.

Still, the accounts had yet to be settled. The purchasers had severally their own methods of obtaining a clear receipt from the travelling merchants: Diane de Castro intended to have recourse to her mother, Madame de Valentinois; Mary Stuart to her uncles, the Guises; the dauphin to his father, Henri II.; Madame Marguerite to herself alone. As to Princess Élisabeth, she was almost a stranger to what was passing, and took as little interest in the question of payment as she had done in the purchase.

But at the very moment when the fair buyers were beginning to think of putting their hands into their own purses, or into the purses of others better furnished than theirs, the two merchants declared they could not at present place a value on the stuffs or jewels; they must consult their books, in order to avoid making any mistake.

Consequently, they asked permission of their illustrious customers to return at the same hour next day; this would have the double advantage of giving the sellers time to fix their prices, and the buyers time to procure money.

As soon as this proposal, which suited everybody, was made, the two peddlers hoisted, with considerable awkwardness, their packs on their shoulders, and took leave, the one in Savoyard, the other in Piedmontese, of the august assembly, with much bowing and scraping, and a profusion of thanks.

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But while they were making ready for departure Marguerite had disappeared, and the eyes of the Piedmontese vainly looked for the princess at the moment when the door of the apartment closed behind him, in which the strange scene we have just related took place.

But when he was in the ante-chamber he was accosted by a page, who laid a finger on his shoulder, and made a sign to him to deposit his burden near the bench of carved wood which ran round the room, and to follow him.

The peddler obeyed, placed his pack on the spot indicated, and followed the page along a corridor, on which several doors opened.

At the sound of his steps one of the doors was flung back; he turned his head, and found himself face to face with the Princess Marguerite.

At the same time the page disappeared behind a piece of tapestry.

The peddler was astonished.

"Fair jeweller!" said the princess, with a charming smile, "do not be surprised because I have summoned you to my presence. I did not care to delay, for fear of not seeing you again, the only payment that is worthy of you and me."

And, with that perfect grace that attended all her movements, the princess tendered her hand to the peddler.

The latter, on his side, knelt down on one knee, took the white hand with the tips of his fingers, and, as courteously as any gentleman, pressed his lips on it, with a sigh which the princess attributed to emotion, and which, perhaps, expressed only regret. Then, after a moment's silence:

"Madame," said the peddler, this time in excellent French, "your Highness does me a great honour; but do you know the man to whom this honour is paid?"

"Monseigneur," said Marguerite, "I entered the castle of Nice seventeen years ago, and Duke Charles presented his son to me as my future husband; from that day I have regarded myself as betrothed to Prince Emmanuel Phili-

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bert, and, full of confidence in God, I have awaited the hour when it should please Providence to unite us. God has rewarded the trust I placed in Him by rendering me to-day the happiest and proudest princess on earth!"

Then, judging that she had said enough, the princess, with a double movement, quick as thought, with one hand flung around the neck of Emmanuel Philibert the chain of gold and precious stones she wore around her own, and with the other let fall the hangings which separated her from him with whom she had now exchanged betrothal gifts.

On the next and two following days, the presence of the two peddlers at the Louvre was vainly looked forward to; and, as Princess Marguerite made no one her confidant as to what had taken place after the merchants left the apartment, those nearest the truth thought that the two generous distributors of jewels and robes were two envoys sent by Emmanuel Philibert to offer them these gifts as wedding presents; but no one went so far as to imagine that one of these two peddlers was the prince himself, and the other his faithful and inseparable friend, Scianca-Ferro.

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VIII.

WHAT PASSED AT THE CHÂTEAU OF LES TOURNELLES AND IN THE STREETS OF PARIS DURING THE FIRST DAYS OF JUNE, 1559.

On the 5th day of June, 1559, a splendid cavalcade, composed of ten clarions, a king-at-arms, four heralds, a hundred and twenty pages attached to the chamber, equerry, falconry, and other departments, and thirty or forty squires who closed the procession, issued forth from the royal palace of Les Tournelles, situated near the Bastille, followed by a great concourse of people who had never seen such magnificence, and halted on the square of the Hôtel de Ville.

There the trumpets sounded thrice, in order to give the windows time to open, and those who were far off to come near; then, when the crowd was very dense, when all eyes were strained and all ears open, the king-at-arms unfolded a great parchment, sealed with the royal seal; and, after the heralds had thrice cried, "Silence! Hear what is about to be said!" the king-at-arms began to read the following cartel: —

BY ORDER OF THE KING.

Inasmuch as, by a long, violent, and cruel war, arms have, in divers places, been employed with effusion of human blood and other pernicious acts customary in war, and inasmuch as God, in His benign grace, clemency, and goodness, has deigned to grant to all Christendom, afflicted with so many misfortunes, the repose of a good and certain peace, it is right fitting that each, with every demonstration of joy, pleasure, and gladness, should praise and celebrate such a great benefit, which has converted all enmities into friendships, and all animosity into good-will, by means of the close

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alliances of consanguinity which are made in consequence of the marriages arranged, pursuant to the treaty of the said peace; to wit: —

Of the most high, puissant, and magnanimous prince, Philip, Catholic King of the Spains, with the most high and excellent princess, Madame Élisabeth, eldest daughter of the most high, puissant, and magnanimous prince Henri, second of the name, most Christian King of France, our sovereign lord.

And also of the most high and puissant prince, Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, with the most high and excellent princess, Madame Marguerite of France, Duchesse de Berry, only sister of the said lord, most Christian king, our sovereign lord;

Who, considering that, thanks to the opportunities offered and presented, arms, when unconnected with cruelty and violence, may and ought to be used by those who desire to test and exercise themselves in virtuous and laudable feats and deeds,

Makes known, therefore, to all princes, lords, gentlemen, knights, and squires, familiar with feats of arms, and desiring to engage therein, in order to excite the young to virtuous deeds and exhibit the prowess of those trained in war, that in the capital city of Paris the lists will be opened by his most Christian Majesty and by the princes Alfonzo, Duke of Ferrara, François de Lorraine, Duc de Guise, peer and grand chamberlain of France, and Jacques de Savoie, Duc de Nemours, all Knights of the Order, to be held against all comers duly qualified, beginning the sixteenth day of the present month of June, and continuing until the accomplishment and conclusion of the feats of high emprise and articles hereunto following.

The first emprise will consist of four thrusts of the lance, on horseback, one against one or two against two, according to the will of the masters of the camp.

The third emprise, on foot, of three pike-thrusts and six sword-thrusts.

And if any one strike the horse in the course, instead of striking the rider, he shall be put out of the lists without permission to return, unless the king grants it.

And the four masters of the camp shall have directions for the due ordering thereof.

And the assailant who has done best on horseback shall have the prize, pursuant to the discretion of the said judges.

Equally, he who has done best with pike or sword shall have the prize, pursuant to the discretion of the said judges.

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All the assailants, as well those of this realm as foreigners, must touch one of the shields, which will be suspended above the steps at the end of the lists, according to the feats of high emprise they wish to achieve, and so will touch several of them, at choice, or all, if they desire it; and an officer of arms will be stationed there to enroll them according to the shields they may have touched.

The assailants also must bring or have brought by a gentleman, to the said officer of arms, their shields emblazoned with their arms, in order that this shield may be suspended at the entrance for three days before the beginning of the said tourney.

And, in case they do not bring, in the said time, or cause to be brought, their shields, they shall not be received at the said tourney except by permission of the holders.

And, in sign of the truth thereof, we, Henri, by the grace of God King of France, have signed the present writing with our hand.

(*Signed*) HENRI.

As soon as the cartel was read, the four heralds cried three times, —

"God save King Henri, to whom may the Lord grant long and glorious days!"

Then the whole troop, king-at-arms, heralds, pages, and squires, uttered the same cry, to which the general acclamation of the crowd responded.

After which the cavalcade, amid a continual flourish of trumpets, resumed its march, crossed the river, went up the Cité as far as the precincts of Notre Dame, halted there, and read the same cartel with ceremonial, which was followed by the same shouts and the same flourishes.

At last, by the same bridge it had crossed in coming, the cavalcade returned, reached the Rue Saint-Honoré, proceeded to the square of the Louvre, where the cartel was again read amid the hurrahs and cries of the multitude, which seemed to understand that this was the last spectacle of the sort it was ever likely to witness.

From there the cavalcade, by way of the exterior boulevards, gained the palace of Les Tournelles, whither the king had transported his court.

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In fact, he had been informed, eight days before, that the Duke of Alba, who was to represent Philip in the marriage ceremony, and in the festivals to succeed it, was advancing towards Paris with a troop of three hundred Spanish gentlemen.

Thereupon, the king had at once evacuated the Louvre, and retired to the palace of Les Tournelles, where he intended residing with all his court as long as the festivals lasted, abandoning his palace of the Louvre to the Duke of Alba and the illustrious guests he was leading with him.

As soon as tidings reached his ear of the arrival of Alba, the king sent M. de Montmorency to meet him, ordering him not to halt until he came up with him.

The constable met the representative of King Philip at Noyon, and accompanied him on his journey to Paris.

When Montmorency and Alba reached Saint-Denis, they perceived coming towards them Maréchal de Vieilleville, superintendent-general, who was commissioned by the king to see that the Spaniards were treated magnificently.

Two hours after the entire troop, refreshed and reinvigorated, made their entry into Paris on one fine morning of the last Sunday in May; magnificent, indeed, was the entry of this troop, composed, as it was, of princes, great lords, gentlemen, squires, and pages, — more than five hundred cavaliers in all.

M. de Vieilleville accompanied the Spaniards through all Paris, from the Barrière Saint-Denis to the Barrière des Sergents; then he lodged, as he had been ordered, the Duke of Alba and the chief Spanish lords in the palace of the Louvre, and the others in the Rue Saint-Honoré.

So when the cartel was read on the Place du Louvre, almost as many Spaniards as French heard it; and, when it was finished, huzzas resounded in both languages.

Now, if the reader who has followed the royal proclamation from the château of Les Tournelles to the square of the Hôtel de Ville, and from the square of the Hôtel de

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Ville to the precincts of Notre-Dame, will accompany it back to the château of Les Tournelles, which it left two hours before, we shall take advantage of his good-will to examine along with him the great works executed by the king on the occasion of the tournament, by the cartel which we have thought it a duty to give in its entirety, notwithstanding its length, not only as a curious and authentic document, and as a specimen of the manners of that epoch in which France breathed its last chivalrous sigh, but also because the laws of that joust will aid us to a better understanding of the feats about to take place before our eyes.

The exterior list — and by that designation we mean the entire circumference of the structure — was raised on a piece of waste land extending from the palace of Les Tournelles to the Bastille; it was two hundred yards long and a hundred and fifty broad.

The oblong framework of the building was made of planks, and covered with the kind of canvas used for tents, except that it had bright stripes of blue and gold, the heraldic colours of France.

On the two lateral projections galleries were erected for the spectators, ladies and gentlemen of the court.

The side opposite the château had three doors, which affected the form of triumphal arches, the door in the centre being more elevated than the two others.

This door also stood back in the list about twelve or fifteen feet, and formed the entrance and the exit of a bastion in which the four holders of the lists had to remain, always ready to meet those who would come to challenge them. In front of this bastion was a transversal barrier, which the squires opened at the cry of "Laissez aller!" The four holders, as we know already, were: Henri II., King of France; Alfonzo of Este, Duke of Ferrara; François de Lorraine, Duc de Guise; Jacques de Savoie, Duc de Nemours.

Four masts surmounted by streamers bore shields, each, respectively, with the arms of these illustrious champions; the assailants, who entered from the opposite side of the

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lists, — where there was a large hall in which they could be armed and unarmed, — were obliged to touch with the handle of their lance the shield of the holder whom they desired to engage, to indicate that they wanted a simple course in honour of the ladies, — a courteous feat of arms.

On this side, as well as on the side opposite the château, a barrier, when opened, gave passage to horse and cavalier.

Undoubtedly, notwithstanding every precaution, a certain thing might happen, which ordinarily happened in such circumstances: there might arise some strong outburst of hatred, all of a sudden; some unknown knight might ask leave of the king to engage in a fight to the death instead of in a courteous feat of arms, and, having obtained this permission from Henri, who would not have the courage to refuse it, might touch the steel of his adversary with the steel and not with the wood of his lance.

Then, in place of mock combat, there would be a real combat, in which the two adversaries, ceasing to play the ordinary game, would stake their lives.

The interior list — in which the courses were to be run — was about forty-five feet wide; this permitted the holders and assailants to run one against one, or two against two, or even four against four.

This list was bounded on each side by a wooden balustrade three feet high, covered with the same kind of stuff that carpeted all the interior of the tent. Barriers, two of which opened at either extremity, allowed the judges of the camp to enter the list, or the assailants — if one of them obtained permission from the king to joust with a judge of the camp, instead of jousting with one of the appointed holders — to pass from the list into the vast quadrilateral reserved on the right and left for the judges of the camp and for the galleries, and touch with the wood or steel of their lance the shield of the person with whom they desired to engage.

There were as many judges of the camp as there were holders; namely, four.

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These four judges were: the Prince of Savoy, Emmanuel Philibert; the Constable of Montmorency; M. de Boissy, Grand Equerry, who was usually styled M. le Grand; finally, M. de Vieilleville, Grand Chamberlain and Marshal of France.

Each of them had a little bastion surmounted by his arms at one of the angles of the quadrilateral.

Two of these bastions, those of the Duke of Savoy and the constable, extended to the front of the palace of Les Tournelles.

The other two, those of M. de Boissy and M. de Vieilleville, lay against the building constructed for the assailants.

The upper part of the bastion of the holders formed the balcony reserved for the queen, princes, and princesses; it was entirely hung with brocade, and a kind of throne had been erected for the queen; there were also armchairs for the princes and princesses, and tabourets for the ladies attached to the court.

The whole construction was as yet empty, but was visited every day by the king, who was counting the minutes until the spectacle took place, and waited impatiently for holders and assailants, judges and spectators.

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IX.

NEWS FROM SCOTLAND.

On the 20th of June, a second cavalcade not less splendid than that of the Duke of Alba arrived from Brussels by the same road, and entered Paris by the same gate.

It was headed by Emmanuel Philibert, future husband of Madame Marguerite of France, Duchesse de Berry.

At Écouen there was a halt. It was remarked that the prince then entered with his page a house, which seemed to be expecting them, as the door opened as soon as they approached it.

This house, almost entirely hidden by a canopy of verdure, was situated outside the city, and stood isolated about a hundred yards from the highway.

The escort, which did not seem to pay much attention to the disappearance of the prince, halted on the other side of the road, and waited.

At the end of two hours, the prince again appeared, but alone; there was on his lips the sad smile of one who has just accomplished a great sacrifice.

It was whispered that his page, who never left him, had, however, left him now.

"Forward, gentlemen!" said Emmanuel; "we are expected at Paris. Forward!"

Then, turning his head with a sigh, as if he would ask from her he was leaving behind him a last encouragement to fulfil a painful duty, he set spurs to his horse, and was soon at the head of the procession which deployed on the route to Paris.

At Saint-Denis, Emmanuel Philibert encountered his old prisoner, the constable, who came to meet him, as he

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had come to meet the Duke of Alba, on the part of the king, and also to congratulate him.

Emmanuel received the compliments of the constable courteously, but also gravely and sadly. It might be seen that the man who was pursuing his journey to Paris had left his heart on the way.

Between Paris and Saint-Denis, thê prince saw a considerable *cortège* approaching; it was evident that this *cortège* was coming to do him honour. He sent Robert of Rovère, captain of his guards, to reconnoitre this troop.

It was composed of two hundred Savoyard and Piedmontese gentlemen, all clothed in black, and wearing each a gold chain around the neck; the Count of Raconis was at the head of it.

It fell in behind the escort of Emmanuel Philibert. On arriving at the barrier, the *cortège* perceived an equerry who had doubtless been on the watch for them, galloping in the direction of the Faubourg Saint-Antoine. This man was a king's messenger and was going to announce to him the arrival of the prince.

At the boulevard, the *cortège* turned to the left, and advanced towards the Bastille.

The king awaited the prince at the foot of the flight of steps of Les Tournelles, holding his sister Marguerite by the hand. Behind him, on the first step, were Queen Catherine and her five children; on the other steps, arranged as if in an amphitheatre, were the princesses with the ladies and gentlemen attached to their service.

Emmanuel Philibert halted his horse ten yards from the perron, and leaped to the ground. Then he advanced to the king and attempted to kiss his hand; but the latter opened his arms, saying, —

"Embrace me, my well-beloved brother!"

Then he presented him to Madame Marguerite.

Madame Marguerite was robed in crimson velvet, the sleeves being slashed with white; her sole ornament was the magnificent enamelled girdle, with its five gold keys,

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which the peddler offered her in the Louvre on behalf of her husband.

At the approach of Emmanuel, the crimson of her robe seemed to pass into her cheeks.

She tendered him her hand; and what the peddler had done at the Louvre, the prince did at Les Tournelles, bending a knee to the earth and kissing that royal hand.

He was afterwards presented by the king to the queen, princes, and princesses in succession.

Each, to do him honour, wore a jewel that had come from the pack of the Piedmontese peddler,—a jewel understood now to be a betrothal gift, as neither of the two travelling merchants had returned to demand its value.

Madame de Valentinois wore her triple crescent of diamonds as a diadem, Madame Diane de Castro her Arabian bracelet, Madame Élisabeth her necklace of pearls less pale than her neck, the dauphin François his handsome poniard, which he had managed to draw from the oak table into which the vigorous peddler had driven it.

Mary Stuart, alone, was without her precious reliquary, which had become the richest ornament of her oratory, and which was, thirty years later, during the night which preceded her death, to receive, in the castle of Fotheringay, the sacred host arrived from Rome, with which she communicated on the very day of her execution.

Emmanuel Philibert, in turn, presented the lords and gentlemen who accompanied him.

These were Counts Egmont and Horn, the two heroes of Saint-Laurent and Gravelines respectively, who were to die on the same scaffold, martyrs of the same faith, nine years later, condemned by the very Duke of Alba now smiling on them in the suite of the king, and waiting till his time should come for shaking hands with them; also William of Nassau, a fine young man of twenty-six, wearing already that air of gloom and sadness which gained him afterwards the surname of the *Taciturn*, and who was styled Prince of Orange, because he inherited, in 1545, the

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principality of Orange from his uncle René of Nassau; finally, the Dukes of Brunswick and Counts Schwartzburg and Mansfeld, who, more fortunate than the other personages we have just named, have not had the gloomy renown of the scaffold or assassination attached to their name.

Then, as if it was necessary that none should be omitted from this group of men and women marked by the finger of destiny in advance, as if led thither by fatality, a cavalier riding at full speed along the boulevard, seeing the magnificent assemblage at the door of Les Tournelles, brought his horse to a stand, leaped to the ground, threw the reins to his squire, and waited till the king addressed him.

As to the king addressing him, he might be assured; the headlong speed of his course, the skill with which he halted his steed, the graceful elegance with which he leaped from the saddle, were well calculated to attract the attention of such a consummate cavalier as Henri.

So, raising his head above the brilliant crowd around him, the king exclaimed:—

"Ah, Lorges! Lorges! the captain of our Scotch Guard, whom we sent to the aid of your mother with three thousand men, my dear Mary, and who, that nothing may be wanting to the brightness of this day, is come to give us news of your kingdom of Scotland. Come hither, Montgomery, come hither!" continued the king; "and as we are going to have grand festivals and rejoicings, take care of the brands! A proverb says we must never play with fire."

It is useless to explain to our readers that King Henri was alluding to the accident caused by Jacques de Montgomery, father of Gabriel, when, at the sham siege of the Hôtel Saint-Paul, which he defended against François I., he struck the latter on the chin with a burning brand, and the injury which was the consequence led to the fashion of wearing the hair short and the beard long,—a fashion that lasted more than a hundred years.

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Montgomery advanced towards Henri, little suspecting that an accident far graver than that which wounded François I., through the instrumentality of his father, was to be encountered by Henri II. in the full tide of those festivals in which he delighted so much, — and an accident of which he himself was to be the unhappy cause.

He was bringing tidings from Scotland of a very opposite nature; the political condition of the country was satisfactory, but the religious was gloomy in the extreme.

Elizabeth of England was not interfering with her neighbour, the frontiers were quiet; but the interior of Scotland was on fire.

The conflagration was the Reformation; the incendiary was John Knox.

That terrible name was hardly known in France when Gabriel de Lorges pronounced it. What mattered it, in effect, to this elegant court of the Valois, living in the châteaux of the Louvre, Les Tournelles, and Fontainebleau; what mattered it to François I., with his Duchesse d'Étampes, his Leonardo da Vinci, Andrea del Sarto, Benvenuto Cellini, Bosso, Primatice, his Rabelais, Budé, Lascaris, and Marot; what mattered it to Henri II., with his Duchesse de Valentinois, with Ronsard, Philibert Delorme, Montaigne, Beza, Du Bellay, L'Hôpital, Jean Goujon, Serlio, Pilon, Catherine de Médicis, and her maids of honour; what mattered it to all this brilliant, brave, frivolous, atheistic world, in whose veins ran a double stream, the French and Italian blood, mingling unceasingly history and romance, chivalry and politics, which was doing its best to make of Paris a Rome, an Athens, and a Cordova at the same time; what mattered it to all these kings, princes, and princesses, to all these noblemen, to all these sculptors, painters, writers, and architects, resplendent with the radiance of glory, art, and poetry, — what mattered it to them what was passing on a corner of the globe which they regarded as the extremity of the civilised world, among a people poor, ignorant, and brutal, considered as a mere

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dependant on the kingdom of France, one of those jewels more curious on account of the metal than of the workmanship, which a queen adds to the chatelaine hanging at her girdle? This land revolt one day against its young King François or against its young Queen Mary? Well, a brilliant company would set out on gilded barges, just like William when he conquered England, or Roger when he conquered Sicily; would take Scotland, and, placing a bracelet of gold on her foot in guise of a chain, would lead her to the knees of the grand-daughter of Edward and the daughter of James V.

Now, Gabriel de Lorges was come to rectify the ideas of the court of France with respect to Scotland: he was come to tell the astonished Mary Stuart that her principal enemy was not the great Elizabeth of England, but a poor renegade priest of the Pontifical court named John Knox.

He had seen this John Knox in the midst of a popular riot, and he had a terrible remembrance of him: he was endeavouring to impress on the future Queen of Scotland his ideas as to the importance of the man. He had followed him during the riot, of which John Knox speaks in these terms: —

"I saw the idol of Dagon [1] broken on the pavement, and priests and monks flying headlong, crosiers flung aside, mitres broken, surplices on the ground, skull-caps in rags; I saw gray monks gaping open-mouthed, black monks puffing out their cheeks, gasping sacristans scattering like crows, and lucky was he who reached his home as speedily as possible; for never was such a panic seen among this generation of Anti-Christ!"

The man whose mouth unchained such a tempest must have been a Titan.

Indeed, John Knox was one of those elements with human faces we see appear amid great political or religious convulsions.

If they arise in Scotland or England at the time of the

[1] The crucifix.

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Presbyterian reformation, they are called John Knox or Cromwell.

If they arise in France at the time of the political reformation, they are called Mirabeau or Danton.

John Knox was born in East Lothian in 1505; he was, at the time we have reached, fifty-four. He was about to be ordained when the words of Luther resounded from Worms to Edinburgh; immediately, with all the violence of his character, John Knox began to preach against the Pope and against the Mass. He was appointed chaplain to King Edward VI. of England in 1552, but was obliged to quit England on the accession of Mary; he retired to Geneva, where he was near Calvin. When Mary was dead and Elizabeth on the throne, he judged the moment favourable to return to Scotland, where he carried thousands of copies of the pamphlet published by him at Geneva, and which was at once an attack on the actual regency of Mary of Lorraine and on the future reign of Mary Stuart.[1]

The tree of reform, planted by him, had grown during his absence, and sheltered under its shade the three-fourths of Scotland.

He had quitted a Catholic country; he returned to a Protestant one.

This was the man Mary had to fear.

But what? Had Mary anything to fear, then?

Scotland was for her not only distant in space, but far away in the future.

What had she, the wife of the Dauphin of France, to do with Scotland,—she, the daughter-in-law of a king scarcely forty-one years old, hale and vigorous, and as ardent as a young man; she the bride of a husband of nineteen years?

What was the worst prediction that could be made to her? That her father-in-law might reign only twenty years, her husband forty. She was as yet ignorant of the fact that the Valois die young.

Why should she care for that wreath of wild roses, bred

[1] This pamphlet was entitled "Against the Government of Women."

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among rocks, which was called the crown of Scotland, when she had in perspective that crown of France, which, according to the saying of the Emperor Maximilian, God would give to his second son, if he had two?

There was, however, in existence that horoscope which an astrologer had composed on the day of Henri II.'s birth, which the constable had so much ridiculed, which the king had intrusted to the hands of M. de l'Aubespine, and which said that the king would be slain in a duel or in a single combat. There was that fatal mark which Gabriel de Lorges had between the two eyebrows, and which had disturbed Charles V. so much until his astrologer told him that this mark affected none but a prince of the *fleur-de-lis*.

But what probability was there that one of the greatest princes of Christendom would ever fight a duel? What probability was there that Gabriel de Lorges, Comte de Montgomery, one of the most devoted lords Henri had, his captain of the Scotch Guard, who had almost saved his life in that encounter with the wild boar in the forest of Saint-Germain, to which we have introduced our readers, should ever raise a parricidal hand against the royal author of his fortunes?

Neither reality, nor prediction, nor present, nor future could depress then, even instinctively, the joyous faces of that splendid court, when the bells of Notre-Dame announced that all was ready, even God, for the first of the marriages about to be celebrated, — that of Philip II., represented by the Duke of Alba, with Élisabeth of France, called Élisabeth of the peace, by reason of the influence this marriage had on the peace of the world.

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X.

THE JOUSTS OF THE RUE SAINT-ANTOINE.

It was on the 27th of June, 1559, that the bells of Notre-Dame shook the old towers of Philip Augustus with the announcement of the solemnisation of the King of Spain's marriage with the daughter of the King of France.

The Duke of Alba, accompanied by the Prince of Orange and Count Egmont, represented, as we have said, King Philip II.

Poor Élisabeth's limbs failed to sustain her as she reached the precincts of the metropolitan church; it was necessary to support her arms, and almost to carry her to the nave. This said service was rendered her by William of Orange and Count Egmont, — the one marked by fate for the bullet of Balthasar Gérard, the other for the scaffold of the Duke of Alba.

Emmanuel regarded her with a sympathetic smile, the significance of which was divined only by Scianca-Ferro, whom the prince had left at Écouen.

After the ceremony they returned to the château of Les Tournelles, where a grand dinner was waiting. There were concerts during the day; and when evening came, Emmanuel opened the ball with the young Queen of Spain, whose only consolation was the absence of her royal spouse for some days longer. Jacques de Nemours danced with Princess Marguerite, François de Montmorency with Diane de Castro, and the dauphin, whom we ought to have named first, with Queen Mary Stuart.

Friends and foes were, for the moment, united, and great enmities were, if not dead, at least sleeping. Still,

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friends and enemies formed two strongly marked and divided groups.

On the one side was the constable with all his sons, as well as Coligny, Dandelot, and their gentlemen.

On the other, François de Guise with all his brothers: the Cardinal de Lorraine, the Ducs d'Aumale, Elbeuf — one forgets the names of these six sons by the same father.

The first, gay, triumphant, and joyous.

The second, gloomy, austere, and menacing.

It was said quite low that if, in the lists to-morrow, one of the Montmorencys should tilt against one of the Guises, there would, instead of a joust, be a true combat.

But Henri had taken his precautions.

He had forbidden Coligny and Dandelot to touch any bucklers except those of Jacques de Nemours, Alfonzo of Este, and his own.

The same prohibition was made in the case of Damville and François de Montmorency.

The Guises were at first wishful not to appear at these festivities. Duc François spoke of the necessity of making a tour in his principality; but Catherine and his brother persuaded him to abandon a resolution which would have been as imprudent as are all resolutions dictated by chagrin and pride.

He remained then, and the event proved that he did well to remain.

At midnight the assembly broke up. The Duke of Alba conducted Élisabeth to her chamber, placed his right leg in the bed, and covered it with a sheet; then, after a few seconds, drew it out from the bedclothes, saluted, and left. The marriage was completed.

The next day, the entire court was awakened by a flourish of trumpets, with the exception of King Henri, who had not slept, so great was his hurry to reach those jousts, the anticipation of which had so long been his delight.

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So, though the tournament was not to begin until after breakfast, as soon as daylight appeared King Henri wandered from the lists to the stables, passing in review his magnificent stallion and his nineteen horses ready saddled and caparisoned, the latter the splendid gift of Emmanuel Philibert.

The breakfast hour having arrived, holders and judges of the camp ate apart, at a round table, intended to be a copy of King Arthur's, and were waited on by the ladies.

The four attendants on the illustrious guests were Queen Catherine, Princess Marguerite, little Queen Mary, and Madame de Valentinois.

The breakfast over, each passed into his apartment to arm himself.

The king had on an admirable cuirass of Milan steel all damascened with gold and silver; his helmet, surmounted by the royal crown, represented a salamander with wings spread; his shield, like that suspended at the bastion, bore a crescent shining in a clear sky, with this device: DONEC TOTUM IMPLEAT ORBEM!

His colours were white and black, the same adopted by Diane de Poitiers on the death of her husband, M. de Brézé.

M. de Guise was clad in his battle cuirass, the same he wore at the siege of Metz; it showed the very visible impress — which may be noticed on it even to-day by those who care to visit the Museum of Artillery at Paris, where it is placed — of the five balls that were flattened on it at the siege of Metz.

His buckler, like that of Henri, represented a sky; only this sky was not so clear. A white cloud veiled a star of gold.

His device was: PRESENT, BUT HIDDEN.

His colours were white and crimson, — "colours," says Brantôme, "of a lady I could name, a maid of honour at the court whose servant he was."

Unfortunately, Brantôme does not name the lady, and we are forced, by our ignorance, to be as discreet as he.

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M. de Nemours had a Milanese cuirass, a present from King Henri II. His buckler represented an angel or a love,— it was difficult to decide which,— bearing a bouquet of flowers, with this device: ANGEL OR LOVE, IT COMES FROM HEAVEN!

His colours were yellow and black, — colours which, according to the same Brantôme, signify, *Joyousness and firmness*, or, *Firm in joyousness*. "For he was then," it was said, "enjoying one of the most beautiful ladies of the world, and therefore was bound to be firm and faithful to her for good reason; for better he could never meet and have."

Finally, the Duke of Ferrara — that young prince as yet unknown, but destined to have a melancholy celebrity as the jailer of Tasso, whom he shut up for seven years in an insane asylum — was armed with an admirable Venetian cuirass. His shield represented Hercules prostrating the Nemean lion, with this device: WHO IS STRONG IS A GOD.

His colours were yellow and red.

At noon, the gates were opened.

In an instant, the places reserved in the galleries were occupied by the lords and gentlemen whose names gave them a right to be present at the tournament.

The royal balcony was next filled also.

On the first day Madame de Valentinois was to give the prize. This prize was a magnificent chain resplendent with rubies, sapphires, and emeralds, separated by crescents of gold trebly enlaced.

These crescents were, as we know, the arms of the fair Duchesse de Valentinois.

On the second day the victor was to be crowned by the hand of Madame Marguerite. The prize was a Turkish battle-axe, exquisitely wrought, — a present from Soliman to François I.

The third day — the day of honour — was reserved for Catherine de Médicis. The prize was a sword whose hilt and handle had been chiselled by Benvenuto Cellini.

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At noon there was a flourish of trumpets from the musicians stationed in a balcony in front of the balcony of the princes and princesses.

The hour for the joust had arrived.

The pages were the first to enter the lists, which they did like a flock of birds. There were twelve pages for each holder, forty-eight in all, each clad in silk and velvet of the same colour as the colours of his master.

Then came four squires; their mission was to pick up the broken lances, and to aid the combatants, if they needed it.

Then, finally, the four masters of the camp came forth, armed *cap-à-pie*, and with lowered visor, on horses similarly armed, and with their caparisons trailing on the ground. Each, bâton in hand, stationed himself in front of the lateral barriers, and stood as motionless as an equestrian statue.

Then the trumpeters of the four holders appeared on the four gates of the bastion, and sounded their defiance to the four cardinal points.

A trumpet responded; and a knight fully armed, with visor lowered and lance at rest, was seen to issue forth from the gate of the assailants.

The collar of the Golden Fleece hung from his neck; by that badge which he had received, in 1546, from Charles V., at the same time as the Emperor Maximilian, Cosmo de Médicis, Grand Duke of Florence, Albert, Duke of Bavaria, Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, Octavio Farnese, Duke of Parma, and Ferdinand Alvarez, Duke of Alba, the spectators recognised Lamoral, Count Egmont. The plumes of his helmet were white and green: they were the colours of Sabine, Countess Palatine, Duchess of Bavaria, whom he had married five years before, at Spires, in the presence of the Emperor Charles V. as well as in that of Philip II., King of Naples, whom he loved tenderly and faithfully until his death.

He advanced, managing his steed with that grace which

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had gained him the reputation of one of the finest horsemen in the Spanish army, — a reputation of such high degree that it was said King Henri, who in this respect had no rival, was jealous of him.

When he had ridden three-fourths of the list he saluted with his lance and with his head the balcony of the queen and princesses, bending the lance-head to the ground, his helmet to the neck of his horse, and touched with the wood of his lance the shield of King Henri II.

Then, amid resounding flourishes, he forced his steed backwards the whole length of the list, and laid his lance in rest on the other side of the barrier.

As the joust was courteous, it was permitted, according to the customs of the tourney, to strike only between the neck and waist, or, as was said at that epoch, between the four members.

At the moment Egmont put his lance in rest, the king rode forth, fully armed.

Even if Henri had not been a king, the applause that broke out at sight of him would not have been less universal. It would be impossible to have a better seat on horseback, or to be at once more firm and graceful in the saddle than was the King of France.

Like Count Egmont, he held his lance ready to his hand. After making his horse turn, in order to salute the queen and princesses, he turned again to his adversary, and levelled his lance.

Immediately the squires raised the barriers, and the judges of the camp, seeing that the combatants were ready, cried in unison,—

"Laissez aller!"

The two cavaliers were only waiting for this moment to rush on each other.

Each struck his opponent full on the breast.

The king and Count Egmont were too good cavaliers to let themselves be unhorsed, and yet the shock was so terrible that Egmont lost a stirrup; and his lance, all

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quivering, dropped from his hand, and fell some paces from him, while the lance of the king flew in three or four pieces, leaving in his hand only a useless splinter.

The two horses, frightened by the shock and the report of the shock, fell back on their haunches trembling.

Henri flung away the splinter of his lance.

Thereupon, while the lists were resounding with the applause of the spectators, two squires leaped over the barriers, — one to pick up the lance of Count Egmont and hand it to him, the other to offer a new lance to the king.

Both retired from the field, and placed their lances in rest.

The trumpets sounded anew; the barriers were reopened, and the judges cried a second time, —

"Laissez aller!"

This time the two lances were shattered; Henri was bent back, as a tree is bent by the wind, almost to the crupper of his horse. Count Egmont lost both stirrups, and was obliged to hold on by the pommel of his saddle.

The king recovered himself; the count took his hand off the pommel; and the two cavaliers, whom any one would think ought to have been unhorsed by the shock, were again firmly seated in the saddle.

The splinters had flown all around them. They let the squires pick them up, and returned, each behind his barrier.

There new lances were presented to them, stronger than the first.

Horses and cavaliers seemed equally impatient; the horses neighed and foamed. It was evident that these noble animals, excited by the course and by the trumpets much more than by the spur, were interested in the combat for its own sake.

The trumpets sounded. All the spectators shouted with joy, and clapped their hands, as happened a hundred years later, when Louis XIV. appeared on a stage, playing the part of the Sun in the ballad of the "Four Seasons."

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But Henri II., as a warrior of the Middle Ages, Louis XIV., as a charlatan of all ages, were each the expression of the France of their epoch, — the first represented the France of chivalry; the second, the France of *gallantry*.

The applause was so loud that the cry of "Laissez aller!" could scarcely be heard.

This time the shock was even more terrible than the two others: one of the feet of King Henri slipped out of the stirrup under the shock of Count Egmont's lance, which was broken in pieces, while the lance of the king remained whole. The blow was so rough that the count's horse reared on its hind legs, and, the girth being broken by the violence of the shock, slipped over the crupper, so that a strange thing happened: the rider, although he did not lose his stirrups, found himself on the ground.

But, as he fell on his feet, this fall, which it was impossible to avoid, served but to exemplify the skill and address of the consummate cavalier.

Nevertheless, the count, saluting Henri, declared himself vanquished, and courteously placed himself at the disposal of the victor.

"Count," said the king, "you are the prisoner of the Duchesse de Valentinois. Go, then, and place yourself at her mercy; it is she, and not I, who will decide your fate."

"Sire," replied Egmont, "if I could have divined that so sweet a slavery was reserved for me, I would have let myself be taken the first time I fought with your Majesty."

"And that would have been a great saving to me, both in men and money, M. le Comte," said the king, determined not to be outdone in courtesy; "for you would have spared me Saint-Laurent and Gravelines!"

The count retired, and five minutes after was on the balcony, kneeling at the feet of the Duchesse de Valentinois, who bound his two hands with a magnificent pearl necklace.

During this time the king, who had accomplished his three courses, drew breath, and left the place to the Duc de Guise, second holder.

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The duke jousted with Count Horn; the three courses were finished not greatly to the disadvantage of the Flemish general, considering that he was tilting against one of the best jousters of his time.

After the third course, with a courtesy equal to that of Count Egmont, he acknowledged himself vanquished.

Then came the turn of Jacques de Nemours. He jousted with a Spaniard named Don Francisco Rigonnès; at the first lance-thrust the Spaniard lost a stirrup; at the second, he was thrown back on the crupper of his horse; at the third, he was lifted out of the saddle and thrown on the ground.

He was, for that matter, the only Spaniard who tried his fortune in the tournament; our neighbours from beyond the Pyrenees recognised that in these kinds of contests they were our inferiors, and did not care to risk their reputation, already somewhat damaged by the check of Don Francisco Rigonnès.

Remained the Duke of Ferrara. He jousted with Dandelot; but, although they separated on almost equal terms, the bluff defender of Saint-Quentin declared, on retiring, that he preferred a real combat with an enemy of France to all these sports, somewhat pagan-looking to a man like him, converted scarcely a year ago to the Reformed religion.

Consequently, he declared his brother Coligny might take his place if the thing pleased him; but, as for himself, he would tilt no more. And, as Dandelot was a rigid man, he kept his word.

The first day ended with a joust of four holders with four assailants; these four assailants were Damville against the king, Montgomery against the Duc de Guise, the Duke of Brunswick against Jacques de Nemours, and Count Mansfeld against Alfonzo of Este.

The king excepted, who, either on account of his real superiority or the courtesy of his adversary, obtained a signal advantage over Damville, the forces were evenly balanced.

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The king quitted the lists, intoxicated with joy.

It is true he did not hear what was whispered around him; nor was this surprising: kings seldom hear even what is spoken aloud.

What was whispered was that the constable was too good a courtier not to have cautioned his eldest son as to the respect with which one ought to treat a king, even with a lance in hand.

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XI.

THE CARTEL.

The next day King Henri was in such haste to renew the jousts that he advanced the dinner an hour, in order to be able to enter the lists at noon precisely.

At the moment the trumpets announced the triple entrance of the pages, squires, and judges of the camp, — an entrance we have tried to describe in the preceding chapter, — a cavalier, in a broad-brimmed hat that concealed the upper part of his face, and, enveloped, in spite of the heat inseparable from a day towards the end of June, in a large sad-coloured cloak, issued from the stables of Les Tournelles, mounted on a Barbary horse, whose fleetness could be appreciated when the rider had forced his way through the crowds that thronged all the approaches to the château, near which the jousts were held.

In fact, on arriving at the corner of the Minimes, he fell into a quick trot, which, near the Corderie des Enfants-Rouges, changed to a gallop, which allowed him to clear the route between Paris and Écouen in an hour.

After reaching Écouen, he crossed the city, always at the same rate of speed, and did not halt until he came to the door of a little isolated house, sheltered by great trees, — a house at which we also have halted with Emmanuel Philibert at the time of the latter's arrival in Paris.

Mules laden with baggage, a horse all saddled, stamping in the yard, indicated that some one was preparing for departure.

Emmanuel Philibert cast a glance round upon all these arrangements, which showed that, although the departure

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had been decided on, it had not yet taken place, tied his horse to a ring, mounted the stairs leading to the first story, and rushed into a chamber where a young woman was sitting, absorbed completely in her own sad thoughts, after fastening the last button in a travelling dress, sombre in colour and simple in form.

At the moment the prince raised his head, she uttered a cry, and, yielding to the impulse of her heart, darted forwards.

Emmanuel received her in his arms.

"Leona," said he, in a tone of reproach, "is this what you have promised me?"

But the young woman could only stammer, with trembling lips and closed eyes, the name of Emmanuel.

The prince, still holding her in his arms, stepped back to a kind of sofa, and sat down, releasing Leona, without, however, ceasing to support her, so that she lay, partly reclining, with her head on one of his knees.

"Emmanuel! Emmanuel!" the young woman kept on murmuring, not having strength to utter anything except that beloved name.

Emmanuel for a long time regarded her in silence, with an ineffable expression of tenderness. Then, when at last she again opened her eyes, —

"It is very fortunate," said he, "that certain expressions in your letter of yesterday betrayed your intention, that a sorrowful dream, in which I saw you all in tears and clad in the garb of a nun, revealed to me your design. Else you were gone, and I should not see you until my return to Piedmont!"

"Or rather, Emmanuel," murmured the young woman in a dying voice, "you would never have seen me again."

Emmanuel turned pale and shuddered. Leona did not see the paleness of his cheeks, but she felt the shuddering of his body.

"No! no!" she said, "I was wrong! Pardon me, Emmanuel, pardon!"

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"Remember what you have promised, Leona," said Emmanuel, with the same grave air he would have had in recalling an engagement to a friend instead of to a mistress. "It was in the Hôtel de Ville of Brussels, with your hand on a sacred image, your brother, — that man whose life we both saved, and who has become the unconscious agent of our misery, — your brother awaiting at the door the favourable response which, in your heavenly goodness, you prayed me to make him, you promised, Leona, you swore that you would be eternally mine, that you would never quit me until the eve of my marriage, and that then, until the death of one of us released the other from all obligation, we should meet on the 17th of November each year, in the little house of the village of Oleggio, into which you, a dying child, were carried by me to your mother, already dead. Often have you said to me, 'You saved my life, Emmanuel! My life is yours; do with it what you will.' Well, since your life is mine, since you have declared so in the presence of Christ, do not, then, sever that life from mine until the last moment possible. And, in order to accomplish the religious fulfilment of that promise, without which, as you know, Leona, I should have refused everything, without which I am still prepared to refuse everything, stimulate your self-sacrifice to its farthest limits, — that self-sacrifice which is the supreme virtue of the woman who loves, and makes her more than angel, since the angels need not sacrifice earthly passions to their devotion, like us unhappy mortals!"

"Oh, Emmanuel, Emmanuel!" murmured Leona, who seemed to return to life and happiness under the looks and voice of her lover; "it is not self-sacrifice that fails me! it is —"

Emmanuel fixed on that charming head a questioning gaze.

"It is —?" he asked.

"Alas!" cried Leona, "it is jealousy! Oh, I love you! I love you! I love you so much, Emmanuel!"

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And the lips of the two lovers met with a double cry of happiness.

"Jealous?" inquired Emmanuel; "you jealous? and of what?"

"Oh, I am so no longer," murmured the young girl; "a love like ours is eternal. I have felt, under your kisses, that death cannot shatter mine, and that it will be rewarded in heaven! How, then, could yours die on earth?"

"You are right, my own Leona," said the prince, giving to his voice those tender and persuasive tones which it was so susceptible of taking. "God has made an exception in my favour: when sending me the heavy burden of a crown, He also bestowed the invisible hand of one of His angels to sustain it on my head. Listen, Leona; that which will exist between us will resemble in nothing that which exists between other lovers. We shall always live, united to each other by that indissoluble union of hearts which can brave time and even absence; except the actual presence, except the sight of each other every hour and every moment, our life will be the same. I know well it is the life of winter, without sun or fruit or flowers; but still it is life! The earth feels that it is not dead; we shall feel that we always love!"

"Emmanuel! Emmanuel!" said the young woman, "oh, you support me now, you console me in turn, and give me new life!"

"And now," said the prince, "let us come down to earth again, and tell me, Leona, what makes you jealous?"

"Since you left me, Emmanuel, only four leagues separated us, and I have seen you but twice!"

"Thanks, my own Leona!" said Emmanuel; "but you know there is high festival in the château of Les Tournelles where I dwell, — a sad festival, for that matter, for two hearts: that of poor Élisabeth and mine. Still, both of us must play our parts in these rejoicings; we must appear in them, and the king summons me to his presence almost every moment."

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"But, then, how does it happen," inquired Leona, "that, in the very middle of the jousting, at the very time when you, as one of the judges, ought to be present, you have left everything to come and see me?"

Emmanuel smiled.

"That is precisely the thing that leaves me free! I ought to be there, but with visor lowered. Suppose that a man of my figure should put on my cuirass, mount my horse, and perform my office as judge of the camp?"

"Ah! Scianca-Ferro!" cried the young woman; "that good Scianca-Ferro! dear Emmanuel!"

"Then I, in my restlessness and torture, on account of your letter and my dream, — I decide to see Leona and ask for a renewal of the promise which she was on the point of forgetting. I strengthen my soul in her soul, my heart in her heart, and we separate as strong as that giant who had only to touch the earth to recover his vigour."

And the lips of the young man touched a second time those of the young girl, and, in touching them, enveloped both in that cloud of flame which hid Mars and Venus from the looks of the other gods.

Let us leave them to drink to the dregs the golden chalice of their last hours of joy, and see what was passing, during the time, in the lists of the palace of Les Tournelles.

At the moment Emmanuel Philibert was riding from the palace at full speed, leaving Scianca-Ferro to put on his armour and fulfil his duties, a squire knocked at the door of the palace, and inquired for Prince Emmanuel Philibert.

The young man was informed that an unknown squire, who insisted on seeing the prince himself, was obstinate in his determination to speak with him. Scianca-Ferro represented the prince; moreover, Emmanuel kept no secrets from his faithful squire.

He put on his casque, the only part of his armour still wanting, and, retiring to the most obscure corner of the apartment, —

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"Let him enter," said he.

The squire appeared on the threshold. He was clad in sombre garb, and bore no blazon and no device which might enable a spectator to guess from whom he came.

"Have I the honour of addressing his Highness Prince Emmanuel Philibert?" he asked.

"You can see for yourself," replied Scianca-Ferro, thus eluding a positive answer.

"Here is a letter from my master. He awaits an acceptance or a refusal."

Scianca-Ferro took the letter, unsealed it, and read the following lines: —

"A man who has sworn the death of Prince Emmanuel Philibert challenges him to a combat *à outrance*, in the jousts to be held to-day, with lance, sword, axe, mace, and poniard, renouncing in advance all claim to mercy, if he is conquered, the prince also renouncing all claim to mercy at the hands of this man, if this man is the conqueror.

"Prince Emmanuel Philibert is spoken of as a brave captain; if he is not unworthy of this reputation, he will accept the combat proposed, and will also consent to obtain from King Henri II. every guarantee for the conqueror.

"A Mortal Enemy."

Scianca-Ferro read the letter without manifesting any sign of disturbance; and, turning to the squire, "Tell your master," he answered, "that it shall be as he desires; and that, as soon as the king has run his courses, he has but to present himself in the lists, and touch with his lance the shield of Prince Emmanuel. This shield is on the right of the bastion, in the quadrilateral, hanging below that of the constable, and opposite M. de Villeneuve's. I pledge my word that every guarantee will be given by the king."

"My master has sent a written cartel; he desires a written guarantee," replied the squire.

At this moment appeared M. de Vieilleville; he came to learn if Emmanuel Philibert was ready.

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Scianca-Ferro lowered the visor of his helmet, and advanced towards the grand chamberlain.

"M. de Vieilleville," he said, "will you be so good as to ask his Majesty to write the word *accordé* at the bottom of this letter? I beg the king to grant me this grace, the refusal of which would be a stain on my honour."

Scianca-Ferro was entirely clad in the armour of the duke; as the visor was lowered, it was impossible to see his blond hair, his blue eyes, and red beard. M. de Vieilleville bowed low before him whom he believed to be the prince; and, as the hour of jousting was near, he hastened to fulfil the commission with which he was charged.

Five minutes after he returned with the letter.

The word *accordé* was written at the bottom, and followed by the royal signature.

Scianca-Ferro silently presented the letter to the squire, who bowed and withdrew.

The pretended prince did not delay long; he entered his apartment to take his sword and mace of battle; and, as he passed in front of the armourer, he ordered him to sharpen three lances.

After this he took the place before the barrier occupied by the prince on the evening before.

The trumpets gave the signal; the heralds cried that the lists were open, and the joust began.

The first who ran was the king; he broke his three lances, — one against the Duke of Brunswick, the second against Count Horn, the third against Count Mansfeld.

Next came the turn of the Duc de Guise, then that of Jacques de Nemours, then that of the Duke of Ferrara.

All these jousts were marvels of address and of strength; but it was evident the attention of the illustrious assembly was entirely absorbed in the expectation of some great event.

This great event was the combat authorised by the king. Henri had not had the courage to keep the whole secret; without saying who was the holder, he had announced the struggle.

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Every one knew the day would not pass, according to all probability, without seeing this arena, that had been prepared for a festival, reddened with blood.

The women shuddered at the idea of a combat with naked weapons; but, while shuddering, they awaited, perhaps with more impatience than the men, this moment of supreme emotion.

What added to the curiosity was the ignorance of the spectators as to the individual holder or judge of the camp who had been challenged.

The king also left in doubt whether the combat was to take place on the second or third day of the tournament.

Now, as the king, the Duc de Guise, the Duc de Nemours, and the Duke of Ferrara had all run their courses, without anything like what was rumoured happening, it was beginning to be believed that either the report was erroneous, or the combat adjourned to the third day.

After the joust of the Duke of Ferrara was to come the general joust, as on the evening before.

The trumpets gave the signal for this joust; but, instead of the four trumpets of the four assailants replying together, a single trumpet was heard sounding a foreign air, with sharp and menacing notes.

A shiver ran along the spectators; a murmur of satisfied expectation, blended with expressions of terror, rose from the stands; heads waved as in a field of wheat tossed by the wind.

Two persons, in all the immense assembly, knew for whom this trumpet sounded: these two persons were the king and Scianca-Ferro, who, in the eyes of the king, as of everybody, was no other than Emmanuel Philibert.

The king stretched his head outside the bastion to see if the duke was at his post.

Scianca-Ferro, who understood the king's anxiety, bowed slightly over the neck of his horse.

"Good courage, fair brother-in-law!" said the king.

Scianca-Ferro smiled under his visor, as if any one could

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have seen him, and threw back his head, shaking the plumes of his crest.

At that moment all eyes turned to the bastion of the assailants. A cavalier in full armour was crossing the threshold, and entering the lists.

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XII.

THE COMBAT WITH NAKED WEAPONS.

This cavalier bore a lance, with the point sharpened, resting on one of the stirrups; a sword hung from one saddle-bow, and an axe from the other.

His squire was behind him, and bore two lances with sharpened points also.

The cavalier was clad in black armour; the plumes of his casque were black; his horse was black, and caparisoned in black.

The only things bright about him were the blade of his axe and the point of his lance, which shone with a sinister radiance.

On his shield was no device, on his targe no blazon to give a hint of the nation or class to which he belonged.

A gold chain on his neck and gold spurs on his heels seemed to show, however, that he was a knight.

At sight of this gloomy personage, who seemed the very envoy of death, all the spectators, except perhaps one, felt a cold shiver run along their veins.

The black rider advanced for about two-thirds of the list, saluted the two queens and the princesses, forced his horse backwards, and soon found himself on the other side of the barrier, which was closed in front of him.

Then he called his squire; the latter laid on the ground the two lances he was holding, in case the first should be broken, took the one his master held, opened the transversal barrier which gave entrance into the quadrilateral, and, marching straight to the bastion of Duke Emmanuel Philibert, he touched with the lance-head the blazon of

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Savoy, surrounded with the personal device of the duke, *Spoliatis arma supersunt!*

A doleful sound was heard as steel struck steel. "Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy, before the King of France, before the princes, before the noble lords, barons, and gentlemen here present; before these queens, princesses, and noble ladies who hear and regard us, my master summons thee to the combat *à outrance, sans miséricorde ni merci*, taking God to witness the justice of his cause and all here present as judges of the manner in which he demeans himself. God and victory for the good right!"

A weak cry responded to this challenge; it escaped from the pale lips of Madame Marguerite, who was almost in a fainting condition.

Then there was deep silence, during which nothing was heard save these words, pronounced by him whom every one took for Emmanuel Philibert: —

"'T is well. Tell your master that I accept the combat according to the conditions proposed by him, with God for judge, the king, princes, gentlemen, lords, barons, queens, princesses, and noble ladies here present for witnesses, and that I renounce his mercy as he renounces mine. And now let God decide on which side is the right!"

Then, with the same calmness with which he would have asked for his bâton as judge of the camp, "My lance!" said he.

A squire advanced, bearing three lances with sharp and shining points; Scianca-Ferro took the first one that came to his hand, gave his steed whip and spur, jumped the lateral barrier, and was in the lists in a moment.

Behind him came a cavalier in full armour, who took the place in the quadrilateral he had vacated.

It was the king in person, and he had decided to do the two adversaries the honour of acting as their judge of the camp.

Profound silence had reigned ever since the black cavalier had entered the lists, both during his challenge and during the reply to it.

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There was, however, some slight applause at the ease and grace with which he made his horse jump the barrier, weighed down as the noble animal was by his *chanfrein* and the armour of the rider; but these applauses died away almost immediately, as in a church or sepulchral cave the voice, at first loud, suddenly sinks on perceiving the sanctity of the place or the solemnity of the situation.

During this time the two adversaries measured each other with their eyes, and made ready their lances.

The squires then took away the barriers, and the king cried, "Laissez aller!"

The three other judges of the camp seemed to have conceded to him this right, as if it belonged to a king alone to give the signal of a combat on the result of which was staked the life or death of a man.

No sooner was the cry of "Laissez aller!" heard than the two adversaries rushed on each other.

They met in the middle of the lists. Each had aimed at a different object: the black cavalier directed his lance against the visor of his adversary; the latter struck his full on the breast.

Only a few seconds after the shock could it be judged what success either combatant had.

The black cavalier had struck off the ducal crown from the casque of Emmanuel Philibert, while the lance of him who had assumed the name and armour of the latter was broken in three pieces against the steel cuirass of his adversary.

Such was the violence of the blow that the black cavalier was bent back on the crupper of his horse, and lost a stirrup. But in a moment the stirrup was recovered, and he was firm in the saddle.

Each of the combatants wheeled round and returned to the starting point.

The squire of Scianca-Ferro brought him a new lance.

The black cavalier also took a new lance, as his first one had been blunted on the helmet of the duke.

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No cry, no applause, no bravo, saluted this encounter; an universal feeling of terror had taken possession of the assembly.

In fact, from the manner in which the two adversaries met, there could be no doubt now that this was a real duel,—a duel to the death, *sans miséricorde ni merci*, as the black cavalier had said.

When the lances were selected and laid in rest, the king a second time uttered the words, "Laissez aller!"

Again a sound, like to the rolling of thunder, was heard; then a shock resounded, as if the thunder had burst. The two horses were bent back on their haunches; the two lances were broken; but while the cuirass of the duke showed the impression of the black cavalier's lance-head only, the splinter of the lance of Scianca-Ferro remained imbedded in the cuirass of his adversary.

For a moment it was thought that the breast was pierced as well as the cuirass; but it was not so. The steel, though passing through the armour, was arrested at the meshes of the gorget.

The black knight seized the splinter with both hands, and tried to pull it out; but the three attempts he made were useless, and he was forced to have recourse to his squire, who was successful only after the second effort.

There had been nothing so far decisive, however, and yet it was felt that the vantage, if there was any, was with the Duke of Savoy.

The two queens were beginning to recover their composure; this terrible game was carrying them away in spite of themselves. Madame Marguerite alone, at each course, averted her eyes, which turned again to the lists only when she heard these words uttered by the young princesses and dauphin, —

"Look! why do you not look?"

The king was at the height of his joy; he was the witness of a real combat. Scarcely did the thought strike him that every chance is uncertain, and his sister might

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be a widow before she was a duchess; it was easy to see he had no doubt as to the victory, from the manner in which he cried, —

"Courage, fair brother-in-law! Victory to the shield of gules and the silver cross!"

However, each adversary took a third lance and made ready for the third course.

Thereupon, for the third time, the king cried,—

"Laissez aller!"

The shock overturned the horse of the black cavalier, and Scianca-Ferro himself, losing both spurs, was compelled to grasp the saddle-bows; but, with admirable address, he seized his mace with one hand, and drew his sword with the other, so that a person might easily have fancied that the movement was caused only by his desire to substitute the weapon with which he wished to continue the combat for the weapon which had just been shivered.

On the other hand, as soon as the black cavalier touched ground, he made a bound to the side of his fallen steed; and with a dexterity equal to that of his adversary, he snatched his sword from the scabbard and his battle-axe from the saddle-bow where it was suspended.

Each of the combatants then took a step backwards, in order to hang his axe from his belt; then when this weapon had been placed within reach of hand, as a last reserve, the two adversaries, leaving their squires to lead away the horses and pick up the lance-splinters, rushed on each other with as much rage and fury as if the combat had only just begun.

If the silence had been great, if the attention had been profound during the first three courses, the case was different when the lances were succeeded by the swords, for it was well known that no one excelled Emmanuel Philibert in handling the sword. No one, therefore, was astonished at the force and violence of the blows that began raining on the black knight; but what really astonished the spectators was the wonderful address with

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which the latter parried them. However quick the attack, not less so was the defence, or rather it was not a case of attack on one side, and defence on the other; there was an equal exchange of strokes, and a terrible exchange it was. The two swords seemed two glaives of flame; no eye, however trained in this game of death, could follow them; only by the sparks that flashed from shield or casque or cuirass could it be known that they touched them.

At last Scianca-Ferro dealt such a blow on the head of his adversary that, finely tempered as the helmet was, it would have been cloven, if the black knight had not parried it with his shield; but the formidable blade cut the shield right through as if it had been leather, and even made a large gash in the armlet.

Embarrassed by a shield divided into two parts, the black knight took a step backwards, flung it from him, and, taking his sword in both hands, he struck in turn such a furious blow on the shield of the duke, that the blade flew in twenty pieces, and only the hilt remained in his hand. Then a roar of joy might be heard from under the closed visor of Scianca-Ferro; the shorter and more massive the weapon, the greater, he felt, would be his vantage over the enemy. The black knight had thrown away the hilt of his sword, and seized his battle-axe; the squire of Emmanuel also threw his sword, and that trusty mace which had gained him the name of Scianca-Ferro was seen to whirl in his hand, gleaming like some golden lightning-flash.

From that moment there was only one cry of admiration in the lists, on the stands, and in the balconies. All comparison would fail to give an idea of the rapidity and violence of the blows. Neither having buckler, the question of address no longer existed for the two combatants; remained only that of strength. Struck as the anvil by the hammer, the black knight at first was motionless as the anvil, and almost as insensible; but stroke followed stroke with such force that he began to recoil. Then his

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adversary recoiled also; the terrible mace turned in his hand like a sling, escaped with a hiss, and struck the black knight full on the visor. After this blow, the latter opened his arms, staggered for an instant, like a tree about to fall; but, even before he was on the ground, with a single bound, the bound of a tiger, Scianca-Ferro was upon him, his poniard ready to hand; the rattle of the two armours against each other was heard, then a cry from all the women, who repeated, "Mercy, Duke of Savoy! Duke Emmanuel, mercy!" But Scianca-Ferro replied, shaking his head, "No, no mercy for the traitor! no mercy for the assassin!" and, through the openings in visor, cuirass, and gorget, he sought a passage for his poniard, when suddenly the cries, "Stop! in the name of the living God, stop!" attracted all eyes towards a cavalier who was galloping into the lists, and who, leaping from his horse, threw his arms around the victor's waist, and with superhuman strength lifting him up, threw him ten paces from the vanquished.

Then the cry of terror was succeeded by a cry of surprise; this cavalier riding at such headlong speed was Emmanuel Philibert, Duke of Savoy.

"Scianca-Ferro! Scianca-Ferro!" he cried, crimson with anger, "what have you done? You know well the life of this man is sacred to me, and that I do not wish him to die!"

"Sacred or not," replied Scianca-Ferro, "by the soul of my mother! I tell you he shall die only by my hand!"

"Fortunately," said Emmanuel, lifting the helmet from the head of the black knight, "it will not be this time at least!"

And, in fact, although his face was covered with blood, the vanquished combatant had only fainted; he had received no serious wound, and it was probable that the care of a doctor would soon restore him to life.

"Gentlemen," said Emmanuel Philibert to MM. de Vieilleville and de Boissy, "you are judges of the camp.

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I place this man under the guardianship of your honour. As soon as he returns to consciousness, let him be free to withdraw, without telling his name or giving a cause for his hatred. It is my desire, it is my prayer, and, if necessary, I shall solicit this grace from the king, in order that it may also be his command."

The squires took the wounded man in their arms, and carried him away.

During this time, Scianca-Ferro unbuckled the clasp of his helmet, from which the crown and crest had disappeared, and flung it from him with indignation.

It was then only that the king made his appearance.

"Why, brother-in-law," said he, "it was not you?"

"No, sire," replied Emmanuel; "it was a man, as you see, who did honour to the armour he wore."

And he opened his arms to Scianca-Ferro, who, though growling like a bull-dog forced to let go his prey, and yet obedient to his master, embraced his foster-brother.

The applause that until now was restrained by terror or suspended by astonishment, burst forth from all quarters, and with an energy that shook the enclosure; the women waved their handkerchiefs, the princesses their scarfs, and Marguerite pointed to the fine battle-axe that was to be the prize of the conqueror.

But all this did not console Scianca-Ferro for the fact that for the second time the bastard of Waldeck escaped alive out of his hands.

So, while he was mounting the steps, conducted by the king and Emmanuel Philibert, to receive the battle-axe from the hands of Marguerite, he murmured:—

"Only let the serpent, brother Emmanuel, fall a third time into my hands, and I swear to you he shall not escape!"

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XIII.

THE PREDICTION.

All that had passed at the tournament on the 29th of June had remained a mystery not only for the mass of the spectators, but even for those whose close social relations with the duke might have been supposed to render them somewhat familiar with his secrets.

How was it that the Duke of Savoy, who ought to have been present, had been absent? How was it that his foster-brother, Scianca-Ferro, had put on his armour? And, above all, how did it come to pass that this other self, this friend, this foster-brother of Emmanuel, had to engage in such a fierce combat in his stead?

These were questions which every one put to his neighbour, but there was no answer; and when the king himself appeared anxious to be initiated into the mystery, Emmanuel begged him, with a smile, not to seek to lift the veil that covered this little corner of his life.

Madame Marguerite alone had a right to demand that he should satisfy that anxious curiosity which is always pardoned when based on real love; but she had been so confused by the late combat, was so happy at seeing her dear duke safe and sound, that she did not inquire further, and the only new sentiment that sprang up in her heart was a strong sisterly affection for Scianca-Ferro.

Thrice did Emmanuel make inquiries as to the condition of the wounded man.

The first time, the latter was unconscious; the second, he was restored to life; the third, he was on horseback.

The sole reply given by the bastard to this evidence of the anxious interest of the prince was in the form of a menace; he murmured, —

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"Tell Duke Emmanuel we shall meet again!"

Then this man, of whom nobody had any knowledge, departed with his squire, who was equally unknown.

It was clear he was ignorant of the fact that he had fought with Scianca-Ferro and not with the duke.

This spectacle, exciting enough, in all conscience, for its own sake, only gave new zest to the pleasures of the evening; but Henri said to the ladies, who were speaking of this event with their habitual enthusiasm, —

"What can I offer you to-morrow, and what spectacle can be worthy of your beautiful eyes, after the one you have seen to-day?"

Poor king! he knew not that the spectacle of the morrow would be so terrible as to completely efface from the minds of historians even the recollection of that on the evening before.

For that matter, there was no want of omens.

About eight in the morning, one of the attendants of Catherine presented herself before Henri II. saying that she came in the name of the queen, humbly praying him to receive her Majesty.

"Receive her?" said the king. "I, on the contrary, will visit her, and that at once. Is she not my queen and my lady?"

Catherine shook her head when this reply was brought to her; she was, in fact, not much of a queen, and still less his lady.

His real queen and lady was the Duchesse de Valentinois.

The king, as soon as he entered, was frightened by the paleness of Catherine.

"Good God!" he exclaimed, "what is the matter with you? Are you ill, and have you passed a bad night?"

"Yes, my dear lord," replied Catherine, "I am ill, but I am also afraid!"

"But," returned the king, "in the name of Heaven, what can you be afraid of?"

"The event of yesterday has revived my old terrors.

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Do you remember, sire, the prediction made at your birth?"

"Ah, yes!" said Henri, "let me think. Was there not some talk of a horoscope of a threatening character?"

"You are right, sire."

"Something about dying in a duel, or in single combat?"

"Well, sire?"

"Well, you see the horoscope was in error; it was my brother-in-law Emmanuel, not I, who was threatened by this horoscope. But, thank Heaven, he has escaped! It is true I cannot tell in what manner, and that I do not understand how that squire of his — that demon, whom they may well call *Brise-Fer* — has happened to be at the point named, clad in his armour, and running that terrible course in his stead against the black knight."

"Monseigneur," replied Catherine, "it was not your brother-in-law Emmanuel who was menaced, it was you. To him the stars promise a long and happy destiny, while to you —"

Catherine paused, trembling.

"Dear lady," returned Henri, "I have little belief in predictions or horoscopes or nativities; but I have always heard that, from the time when some such prediction was made to Œdipus, a monarch of ancient times, up to the one made to good King Louis XII. on the day of his marriage with Madame Anne of Bretagne, all precautions taken against their fulfilment have been useless, and that what must be, must be. Let us trust, then, to the goodness of God and to the intercession of our guardian angel, and let things take their course."

"Sire," said Catherine, "would it not be all the same to you not to enter the lists to-day?"

"What, madame!" exclaimed Henri, "not enter to-day? But are you unaware that I have decided to joust to-day with my three companions, M. de Guise, M. de Nemours, and M. de Ferrara? It was an ingenious method I adopted

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of not having to abandon the lists, and, as this is the last tournament we shall have, of enjoying it to the full."

"Sire," said Catherine, "you are the master; but to go against the warnings of the stars is to tempt God, for the stars are the heavenly alphabet."

"Madame," replied Henri, "I am grateful in the highest degree for your anxiety; but except there be positive warning of a very real danger, I cannot change the programme of the day."

"Sire," said Catherine, "unfortunately there is nothing positive except my fears, nothing real except my anxiety; and I would give much if any one whose influence with you is greater than mine should ask you to grant the favour you have just refused me."

"No one has more influence with me than you, madame," answered Henri, with dignity; "and you may well believe this, — that what I refuse to the mother of my children, I would never grant to any one."

Then gallantly kissing her hand, — a hand, moreover, the most beautiful in the world, —

"And now, madame," he added, "do not forget, I pray you, that you are to-day the queen of the tournament, and that I am going to do my best to be crowned by your hand."

Catherine sighed; then as if, having accomplished her duty, she left all the rest to God, —

"It is well, sire," she said; "let us say no more about it. It may be, after all, that it is another prince whose days are menaced; but, in truth, I should have less fear of a real duel than of this semblance of a combat, for the prediction is positive, and it is in a tournament or jousting that the danger lies: *Quem Mars non rapuit, Martis imago rapit!* He whom Mars hath spared, the image of Mars seizeth!"

But Henri was too far away to hear the text of the prediction which Catherine murmured in a faint voice.

Whether through preoccupation or some other motive, Catherine was not present at the dinner; but she was one of the first to take her seat in the royal balcony.

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It was afterwards remarked that she was clad in a robe of violet velvet, slashed with white satin, the mourning of courts.

When the time came for arming, the king summoned M. de Vieilleville, the grand chamberlain, to render him this service.

Strange to say, the grand equerry, M. de Boissy, was not at his post.

It was M. de Vieilleville who announced to the king the absence of M. de Boissy.

"Well, since you are there, Vieilleville," said the king, "there is no harm done; you may arm me."

M. de Vieilleville obeyed; but at the moment of placing the casque on the head of the king, his courage seemed to fail him, and, heaving a profound sigh, he said, at the same time placing the casque on the table instead of on the king's head, —

"God is my witness, sire, that never did I accomplish a task more against my heart than this one."

"And why so, my old friend?" asked Henri.

"Because," replied M. de Vieilleville, "for more than three nights I have done nothing but dream that some misfortune was sure to happen to you to-day, and that this latter end of June will be fatal to you."

"Tush!" said the king, "I know the story, and I know from what direction the wind blows."

"I do not understand you, sire."

"I say that you have seen Queen Catherine this morning."

"Sire, I had the honour of seeing the queen, not this morning, but yesterday."

"And she has spoken to you of her visions, has she not?"

"Sire, Queen Catherine did me the honour of speaking to me three days ago, and what she said had no reference to the fear which I have just mentioned to your Majesty. For that matter," continued the grand chamberlain, who

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seemed a little hurt at the notion that the king should consider him the mouthpiece of another person, "the king is the master, and will do as it pleases him."

"Come now," retorted the king, "shall I tell you why you are alarmed? It is because you are marshal only on my word, and the patent is not yet signed. But do not be uneasy, Vieilleville, unless I be killed on the spot, you shall have your patent; if I cannot sign my name in full, I will sign my initials, which amounts to the same."

"Since your Majesty takes it so," replied Vieilleville, "I have no longer anything to say, except to ask your pardon for what I have said. However, if any misfortune happened to the king, you may be assured that it would not be my patent I should regret, but the misfortune."

And he placed the casque on the king's head.

At this moment entered Amiral de Coligny. He was armed, save the helmet, which a page held behind him.

"Deign to excuse me, sire," said he; "but I fear there has been some change made in the programme for the last day. There is talk of the jousting ending with a *mêlée*. I should like to know if there is any truth in this; for, in such a case, I would have some words of importance to address to your Majesty on this subject."

"No," replied the king; "but tell me, my dear admiral, what you would have to say if there was to be a *mêlée*."

"Sire," replied Coligny, "pardon a question which I swear to you is not dictated by mere curiosity. Against whom does the king count on running?"

"Oh, my dear admiral, that is no secret, and you must be deeply engrossed with theological questions to be ignorant of it! I run against M. de Guise first, then against M. de Nemours, then, in fine, against the Duke of Ferrara."

"And your Majesty will make no other course?"

"No, not as I think at present, at least."

The admiral bowed.

"Then," said he, "your Majesty will permit me to

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express my pleasure and happiness at what I have just learned; it was all I desired to know."

"Well, my dear admiral," said the king, laughing, "your pleasure and happiness are easily satisfied!"

Then, addressing Vieilleville, —

"Come, come, Vieilleville," he said, "order the trumpets to be sounded; we are late, I fear."

The trumpets sounded, and the joust began.

As the king had stated, the first course was between him and Guise; it was superb. The two jousters displayed all their skill; however, at the third encounter, the assault of the king was so violent that the Duc de Guise lost both spurs, and, to avoid falling, was compelled to grasp the pommel.

The honour was with the king, although several claimed that the fault was not M. de Guise's, but his horse's, which was restive.

The three courses finished, came the turn of Jacques de Savoie. The king had a new girth put on his steed, and he himself selected his lance with the greatest care.

We have already mentioned the reputation of M. de Nemours for skill and strength in this warlike sport.

He sustained his reputation, but the king lost nothing of his.

At the third encounter, the horse of Nemours fell, and as horse and rider in front of him remained on their legs, the king was declared victor by the judges of the camp.

At last, the trumpets gave the signal for the final passage at arms. It was, as we have said, between the king and the Duke of Ferrara.

Although an expert at this sort of game, Alfonzo of Este, who was afterwards to ruin his duchy with tournaments and all kinds of festivities, was not an adversary capable of giving much trouble to Henri II.

Queen Catherine, who was following the jousts with rea anxiety, began, therefore, to recover her serenity somewhat.

The stars had told her that, the 30th of June once

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passed, she need have no cause to fear on account of her husband, and that, if this last day went by without accident, Henri would reign long and happily over France.

The trumpets sounded; the king and the Duke of Ferrara completed their three courses. In the last, the Duke of Ferrara lost both the stirrups, while the king remained firm in the saddle.

The king, therefore, was the victor.

But he was not satisfied. It was not yet four in the afternoon; the applause intoxicated him, and he was loath to quit the lists.

"Ah, *mordieu!*" he said, as the judges of the camp declared that all was finished, "it would be to be a victor at very small cost!"

And, perceiving Montgomery, who was standing in the bastion of the assailants, completely armed, except the headpiece, —

"Ah, Montgomery!" he cried, "M. de Guise told me that you were very near unhorsing him the other day, and that he had never encountered better jouster than you. Come, while I am recruiting myself with a glass of wine, put on your helmet at once, and we shall break a lance to the glory of our ladies."

"Sire," said Montgomery, "I should feel great pleasure in accepting the honour which your Majesty deigns to grant me, but there are no more lances here, the call for them has been so great."

"If there are none near you, Montgomery," said the king, "there are some near me, and I shall send you three to choose from."

And, turning to his squire, —

"Ho, France!" he said, "three of your best lances for M. de Montgomery."

Then he descended from his horse, re-entered his bastion, had himself unhelmed, and asked for wine.

At this moment, as he was holding the goblet in his hand, the Duke of Savoy entered.

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"A goblet for M. de Savoie," said he; "I wish him to drink to the health of Madame Marguerite, while I drink to the health of my lady."

"Sire," said Emmanuel, "nothing could delight me more; but let me first fulfil my commission."

"Speak," said the king, all on fire with pleasure; "I am listening."

"I come in the name of Queen Catherine, sire, to beg you not to run again. Everything has ended happily; she ardently desires that your Majesty should be content to let matters rest now."

"Tush!" said the king, "have you not heard that I have challenged M. de Montgomery, and have sent him lances to choose from? Tell the queen that I run this time for love of her, and, when this course is finished, all will be over."

"Sire," insisted the duke.

"A goblet! a goblet for M. de Savoie! and, in return for the health he is about to drink to my sister, I will restore him the marquisate of Saluces. But, in God's name, do not hinder me from breaking this last lance!"

"You will not break it, however, sire!" said a voice behind him.

The king turned his head and recognised the constable.

"Ah, it is you, my old bear! What are you doing here, except you want to drink? Your place is in the lists."

"The king is mistaken," said Montmorency; "my place was in the lists as long as the lists were open; but the lists are closed, — I am no longer judge of the camp."

"Closed?" said the king. "Not yet! I have still a lance to break."

"Sire, Queen Catherine —"

"Ah, you come also on her part!"

"Sire, she entreats you —"

"A goblet! a goblet for the constable!" interrupted the king.

The constable took the goblet, grumbling, —

"Sire," said he, "after the peace I negotiated lately, I

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fancied I was an ambassador of some merit; but your Majesty convinces me I have had too good an opinion of myself, and ought to go back to school again."

"Come, duke!" said the king; "come, constable! we must each of us drink to his lady; you, brother-in-law, to Marguerite, the pearl of pearls; you, constable, to Madame de Valentinois, the fairest of the fair; and I to Queen Catherine. You must both tell her that I have emptied this goblet to her health, and that I run this last lance in her honour."

There was no use struggling with such obstinacy. The two envoys bowed and left.

"Ho, Vieilleville!" cried Henri, "my casque!"

But, instead of Vieilleville, it was Coligny who entered.

"Sire," said Coligny, "it is I again. Will your Majesty pardon me?"

"You are fully pardoned, admiral; and, since you are here, will you buckle my helmet?"

"Sire, first a word —"

"Not now, if you please, my dear admiral, — afterwards."

"Afterwards, sire, would be too late for what I have to say to you."

"Then say it as quickly as possible."

"Sire, you will not run against M. de Montgomery."

"Ah, you too!" cried the king. "I thought Huguenots boasted of not being superstitious; such things are good enough for the queen, who is a Catholic, and a Florentine in addition."

"Sire, listen to me," replied Coligny, gravely. "What I have to tell you is the more serious that the warning comes to you from a great emperor who is now dead."

"Ah, ah! it is a warning from the Emperor Charles V., which you forgot to give me on your arrival from Brussels, is it not?"

"The king is mistaken; I gave that warning, but indirectly, when I prevailed on your Majesty to send Montgomery to Scotland."

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"Ah, it is true, the advice came from you! Well, he has been there, and served me well."

"I know it, sire. But perhaps you are not aware why I advised you to send M. de Montgomery into Scotland?"

"In fact, I am not at all aware."

"Well, it was because the Emperor Charles was informed by his astrologer that M. de Montgomery had between his two eyebrows a mark which showed he would, some day or other, be fatal to a prince of the *fleur-de-lis*."

"Pshaw!"

"The august emperor charged me to warn your Majesty of this horoscope; but, as I knew M. de Montgomery to be one of your most devoted servants; as I was sure if he became fatal to a prince of the *fleur-de-lis*, he would become so involuntarily; and as I was afraid I might affect him injuriously in your Majesty's opinion, if I divulged this prediction, — I contented myself with advising you to send the captain of your Scotch Guard to Scotland with aid for the regent. Again, when I heard there was going to be a *mêlée* to-day, I came to inquire of your Majesty if it was true, in order — in such a case — to keep M. de Montgomery out of it, or to see, as I did the last time, that he did not encounter your Majesty. There was no *mêlée;* consequently, I had nothing to do or say in connection with it. But now that, by a kind of fatality, when the jousts are ended, the king has challenged M. de Montgomery, I appeal to the king, and, in the hope of arresting this joust, I tell you, sire, what the emperor himself told me in relation to Comte de Lorges. Sire, in the name of Heaven, do not run against M. de Montgomery! M. de Montgomery will be fatal to a prince of the *fleur-de-lis*, and of all the princes of the *fleur-de-lis*, the King of France is the greatest."

Henri was for a moment pensive; then, laying his hand on the shoulder of Coligny, —

"Admiral," he replied, "if you had told me this morning what you have told me now, it is probable I should

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not have challenged Montgomery; but now that the challenge has been delivered, it is too late, — it would look as if I drew back through fear. Now, God is my witness, I fear nothing in the world. I am not the less thankful to you, M. l'Amiral; but let misfortune happen to me or not, it is too late, — I must break this lance."

"Sire," said a squire, entering at this moment, "M. de Montgomery is armed, and awaits the good pleasure of the king."

"It is well, my friend; the good pleasure of the king is that you buckle my helmet, and that the trumpet sound."

The half only of the king's order was fulfilled. The squire buckled the helmet; but the musicians, believing that the tournament was over, had left the balcony which served them as a stand.

When this untoward circumstance was told the king, and also that they were near enough to be recalled, but that it would take half an hour, he exclaimed, —

"Tush! it would take too long. We shall run without flourishes, — what does it matter?"

Then he mounted his horse, and issued from the bastion, crying, —

"Ho! M. de Montgomery, are you ready?"

"Yes, sire," replied the count, issuing in his turn from the opposite bastion.

"Messieurs," said the king to the judges of the camp, "you see that we only await your permission."

"Laissez aller!" said the Duke of Savoy and the constable.

And amid the deepest and most lugubrious silence the two jousters rushed forth and met in the centre of the lists, both breaking their lances.

Suddenly, to the great astonishment of the spectators, the feet of the king were seen to lose hold of the stirrups, and his arms, dropping the rein, to cling round the neck of his horse, which completed its course, while Montgomery, as

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if petrified with terror, threw away the fragment of the lance which had remained in his hand.

At the same time, MM. de Vieilleville and de Boissy, suspecting from the attitude of the king that something extraordinary had occurred, leaped over the barrier and seized the horse's bit, crying, —

"For the love of God, what is the matter, sire?"

"You were quite right, my dear Vieilleville," stammered the king, "in opposing this accursed course."

"Are you hurt then, sire?" asked the grand chamberlain, anxiously.

"I believe I am dead," murmured the king, in a voice so feeble that those who supported him could scarcely hear him.

In fact, the fragment of Montgomery's lance, slipping along the armour of the king, had raised the visor, and a splinter had penetrated the eye and touched the brain.

Then collecting all his strength in one last cry, —

"Let not M. de Montgomery be troubled," he said; "it was not his fault."

A confused, terrified clamour arose from the ranks of the spectators, and all scattered in tumultuous disorder, as if the thunderbolt had fallen in their midst, each flying in his own direction, and crying on his road, —

"The king is dead! The king is dead!"

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XIV.

THE BED OF DEATH.

Meanwhile, MM. de Boissy and de Vieilleville had borne the king into his chamber, and laid him, armed as he was, on the bed.

They could not take off his helmet, as the splinter was sunk in the wound two or three inches deep.

The surgeons present at the tournament ran up.

There were five of them; but none dared take on himself the responsibility of drawing the splinter from the wound, and although Queen Catherine, the dauphin, and princesses — who alone were admitted into the chamber — entreated them to do something for the relief of the wounded king, they looked at one another, shaking their heads, saying, —

"Send for Maître Ambroise Paré as quickly as possible; for without him we cannot undertake anything."

"Let Maître Ambroise Paré be found, wherever he is!" said the queen.

And on the very instant servants, pages, and equerries darted in all directions, inquiring in every quarter where it was possible to get tidings of the illustrious surgeon.

In fact, Ambroise Paré was, at this period, at the apogee of his reputation. After following René de Montejean, colonel of infantry, into Italy, he returned to France, took his degrees in the college of Saint-Edme, was named provost of the corporation of surgeons, and for seven years had been attached to the person of the king as surgeon-in-chief.

He was discovered in the garret of a poor tiler, who had fallen from a roof, and broken his leg.

A cry of "Here is Maître Ambroise Paré! here he is!" announced his arrival.

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Then appeared on the threshold of the door a man of from forty-five to forty-six years, with a grave demeanour, a prominent forehead, and thoughtful, meditative eyes.

Each, on perceiving him, drew back to open a path to the bedside of the patient.

"Look, master," said the physicians.

And all eyes were riveted on him who was regarded as the only man in France capable of saving the life of the king, if the life of the king could be saved.

We say *in France*, for there was outside of France a man whose reputation was superior to that of Ambroise Paré, and whom the latter was well pleased to call his master.

This man was André Vesale, the surgeon of Philip II.

All those eyes, riveted on Ambroise Paré, were asking more eloquently than words what was to be hoped or what was to be feared.

It was impossible to read anything on the face of the illustrious practitioner; it could only be noticed that at sight of the wound his countenance grew slightly pale.

"Oh, Maître Ambroise," cried Catherine de Médicis, "do not forget it is the King of France I intrust to your hands!"

Ambroise Paré had already stretched out his arm towards Henri II.; he let it fall back again by his side.

"Madame," said he, "in the state in which your august spouse is at present, the real King of France is not he, but his successor. I ask leave to treat him as I would the lowest soldier in the army; it is the only chance I have of saving him."

"There is, then, a chance, Maître Ambroise?" inquired the queen.

"I do not say so, madame."

"Do your best, maître!" replied Catherine. "We know you are the most skilful man in the kingdom."

Ambroise did not reply to the compliment; but, supporting his left hand against the upper part of the helmet, he seized with the right hand the splinter, and, with a move-

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ment as sure as if it had been operated, as he said, on the lowest soldier of the army, he drew it from the wound.

Henri shivered through his whole body, and heaved a sigh.

"Now," said Ambroise, "take off the king's casque and armour, and do so as gently as possible."

M. de Vieilleville laid his hand on the casque; but he trembled to such a degree that the surgeon stopped him.

"Let me do it," said Paré. "I am the only one whose hand has not the right to tremble."

And, laying the head of the king on his left arm, he unbuckled the helmet slowly but surely, without any shock. The helmet taken off, there was less difficulty about the rest of the armour.

The entire body was stripped without the wounded man making the slightest movement; there was for the time complete paralysis.

When the king was placed in a restful position, Ambroise Paré proceeded to the consideration of the wound.

An examination of the splinter, which he had laid with the greatest care on a table near the royal bed, indicated to him that the foreign body had entered the head for a length of very nearly three inches, and the detritus around the wood that it had penetrated as far as the membranes of the brain.

Ambroise delicately raised the lips of the wound with a spatula, and, with the help of a silver stylet, sounded it.

As might be judged by the fragment he had withdrawn from it, this wound was horrible!

He then applied to it the powdered charcoal, which at that period was used instead of lint; next, he applied to the eye a compress of ice-water, which was to be renewed every quarter of an hour.

At the contact of the water the figure of the wounded man contracted, — a proof that all sensibility was not yet extinct in him.

The surgeon appeared to experience a certain satisfaction

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at sight of this nervous contraction; then, turning to the royal family, all in tears, and addressing the queen,—

"Madame," said he, "I cannot, for the present, judge what may be the issue; but I can tell your Majesty that there is no immediate danger of death. Consequently I would advise you to retire and take some repose, and give a moment's rest to your grief. As for me, I shall not quit the bedside of the king until he is cured or dead."

Catherine approached the sufferer, bent over him, and kissed his hand; but, while kissing his hand, she drew from his finger the famous ring which Madame de Nemours had once taken from him, and to which, it was said, was attached the mystery of that long love of Henri for Diane.

As if he had felt that some deep-rooted sentiment was being violently plucked from his heart, the wounded monarch started, just as he did when the splinter was torn out of his wound.

Ambroise Paré advanced quickly. "Pardon, madame," said he, "but what have you done to the king?"

"Nothing," said she; "only perhaps the king, from the depths of his unconsciousness, has recognised me."

The dauphin, princes, and princesses followed Catherine in due order.

Outside the king's chamber Catherine met M. de Vieilleville, who had just changed his linen, having been all covered with the blood of the king.

"M. de Vieilleville," asked the queen, "where are you going?"

"I am grand chamberlain, your Majesty," he answered, "and my duty is not to quit the king's side for an hour."

"Your duty is in harmony with my wishes, M. de Vieilleville. You know that I have always held you for my good friend?"

M. de Vieilleville bowed. Although, at this period, Catherine did not treat her *good friends* so badly as she did afterwards, it was not without a certain anxiety that the man to whom she gave this title received the favour.

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"Madame," said he, "I very humbly thank your Majesty for the esteem in which you hold me, and I shall do my best to endeavour to prove myself not unworthy of it."

"You will have only one thing to do, M. le Comte, and it is a very easy thing: you will have to prevent Madame de Valentinois and every one belonging to the constable's party from coming near the king."

"However, madame," said Vieilleville, considerably embarrassed by the commission, which consolidated his favour, it is true, if the king died, but would make his position very doubtful if the king recovered, "if Madame de Valentinois should insist on entering?"

"You will tell her, my dear count, that, as long as the king is unconscious, it is Queen Catherine de Médicis that reigns, and that Queen Catherine de Médicis does not wish the courtesan Diane de Poitiers to enter the chamber of her dying husband!"

"But, then," returned Vieilleville, scratching his ear in his perplexity, "there is a story about a certain ring —"

"You are mistaken, M. de Vieilleville; this ring exists no longer. We have drawn it from the finger of our well-beloved lord, in order that — if his Majesty passed from life to death, which Heaven forfend! — we might use it to seal your patent as Marshal of France, which, as you are aware, is not yet signed."

"Madame," said Vieilleville, reassured by the sight of the ring as much as by the words of Catherine, "you are the queen, as you have said, and as such your orders shall be executed."

"Ah! I well knew, my dear Vieilleville," said Catherine, "that you were my friend!"

And she left him, carrying with her in her heart, in all probability, a fine contempt for the human species.

The king remained four days perfectly motionless: during these four days Madame de Valentinois presented herself several times; but the door was obstinately shut against her.

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Some of her friends advised her to quit the palace of Les Tournelles and await events in her apartments at the Louvre, and even at her château of Anet, showing her that, if she was obstinate in remaining, some misfortune might befall her.

But her constant answer was that her place was where the king was, and that as long as he preserved a breath of life she was tranquil: her most furious enemies would not dare to attempt anything against either her life or liberty.

On the eve of the third day — that is to say, about seventy-two hours after the event — a man, covered with dust, descended from a horse covered with sweat and foam, at the door of the palace of Les Tournelles, saying that he came from King Philip, and demanded to see King Henri if he was still alive.

Every one knew what orders had been given, and how carefully the entrance to the king's chamber had been guarded.

"What name shall I give to her Majesty the Queen?" asked the usher on duty, who was answerable for each person who opened the door to M. de Vieilleville.

"It is rather to my learned *confrère*, Ambroise Paré, you should tell my name than to the queen," replied the unknown. "I am called André Vesale."

The usher entered the chamber of the king, who was always in a faint, and apparently utterly unconscious; then, approaching Ambroise Paré, who, with a head freshly cut in his hand, was seeking in the interior of the brain for the mysteries of human life and human intelligence, which are still unknown, he repeated the name he had just heard.

Ambroise Paré made him repeat it a second time, and, sure now that he had heard aright, uttered a cry of joy.

"Ah! messieurs, good news! If the king can be saved by human science, one man alone can perform this miracle. Messieurs, thank God, that man is here!" And opening the door abruptly, —

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"Enter, enter," said he, "you who are now the true and only king here!"

Then to M. de Vieilleville, —

"M. le Comte," said he, "be good enough to inform the queen that the illustrious André Vesale is beside her august spouse."

M. de Vieilleville, happy at being the messenger of seemingly good news to the queen, darted out of the apartment, on the threshold of which appeared, as we have said, a man of about forty-six years, of middle height, with keen and intelligent eyes, brown complexion, and curly hair and beard.

This man was, in fact, André Vesale, whom King Philip II., having learned through a courier sent by the Duke of Savoy of the accident to his father-in-law, had sent in all haste to the relief of the sufferer.

The courier had come up with King Philip at Cambray; and as André Vesale, his physician, was near him at the moment, the illustrious anatomist was able, at the end of the third day, to find himself by the bedside of the sufferer.

The immense reputation enjoyed by André Vesale at that period is well known; there is no need to be surprised, therefore, at the manner in which he had just been received by a man so conscientious and modest as Ambroise Paré, — a man very superior to Vesale in manual dexterity, much more adroit in extracting a ball or cutting off a limb, but very inferior to the latter in theoretic knowledge, and especially in all matters relating to anatomical science.

Anatomy, indeed, had been the passionate life-study of the Brabant doctor. At a time when the religious principle made the dead body sacred, and was opposed to searching for the secrets of life in death, he exposed himself to the hatred of fanatics, in order to enable science, stumbling in the darkness of ignorance, to make a few steps more.

Vesale first studied at Montpellier. Ever since 1376 the doctors of this school had the right, in virtue of a permis-

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sion obtained from Louis of Anjou, to take each year the dead body of a criminal who had been executed, for the purpose of dissection. This permission was continued by Charles the Bad, King of Navarre, and by Charles VI., King of France.

Vesale studied there in 1532; he was then eighteen years old; afterwards he came to Paris.

There, his daring in braving the dangers involved in the trade he adopted of snatching corpses from the cemeteries gained him a reputation. Every night, in graveyards or under gibbets, he might be seen disputing with the dogs and ravens dead bodies often in a state of putrefaction.

After three years spent in these dismal toils, Vesale obtained a professor's chair at Louvain, and was allowed to make anatomical demonstrations which the possession of a skeleton enabled him to render effective.

This skeleton aroused the susceptibility of the magistrates.

Vesale, summoned before them, was questioned as to the manner in which the skeleton fell into his hands.

"I brought it from Paris," said Vesale.

The illustrious anatomist lied; but he did not regard a falsehood which accrued to the salvation of humanity as a sin.

How had Vesale procured this skeleton? We are about to see.

One day, in company with a friend named Gemma, he was crossing the field devoted to the execution of criminals about a quarter of a league from Louvain. He happened to perceive a dead body, which the beaks of the birds of prey had almost reduced to the condition of a skeleton. The bones, glistening in their whiteness, attracted the eye of sublime sacrilege, and he resolved to appropriate this human carcase. The lower extremities were detached easily enough; but, for fear that the vertebræ of the neck, broken by the weight of the executioner, who, as we know, used to glide over the gibbet on to the shoulders of the criminal,

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could no longer support the body, a chain had been passed round the trunk, and fastened to the gibbet.

It was necessary to defer the rest of the robbery until night. The bones of the legs and thighs were carried off and hidden; then came the hour when owls and sorcerers are thought to be the only wanderers over these plains of desolation. Vesale returned, without his friend, who no longer dared to accompany him, and, aided by his hands only, he detached the skeleton from its chain.

In three nights the parts of what had been a man, living, thinking, loving, suffering, like him who was now appropriating his remains, were borne into the city. Three more nights sufficed to clean and fix them in proper order on wires.

And now you know how André Vesale procured that skeleton which scandalised the magistrates of Louvain, and which he affirmed he had brought from Paris.

Then arrived the war of Italy between Charles V. and François I. Vesale followed the Spanish armies, as Ambroise Paré did the French armies. Twice only, once at Montpellier and once at Paris, had he had an opportunity of being present at the opening of human corpses not yet putrefied; and it was with a kind of frenzy that, having more freedom on battlefields than elsewhere, he devoted himself, though always in a clandestine manner, to those anatomical studies that have been immortalised by the pencil of Rembrandt.

It was then after several autopsies, made in public or in his cabinet, that he ventured on reforming Galen, who, having dissected only the bodies of animals, swarmed with errors.

He did more: he published and presented to the Prince Don Philip a "Manual of Anatomy," which was but the prospectus of the great work he promised to publish later on.

But from that moment the professors, his rivals, and consequently his enemies, found a surface whereat to bite, attacked the book as sacrilegious, and raised such a

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clamour from Venice to Toledo that Charles V. himself was frightened by such a hubbub, and delivered up the work to the theologians of the University of Salamanca, in order that they might decide if it was lawful to open dead bodies.

Fortunately, the monks replied by a decree more enlightened than those usually emanating from religious orders:

"It is useful, consequently, permitted."

Thereupon, the facts averred being insufficient for the condemnation of Vesale, recourse was had to calumny.

The rumour ran that Vesale, being in too great a hurry to study the disease of which a Spanish gentleman died, had opened his body before he breathed the last sigh.

The heirs of the dead man, it was said, had forced the door of the bedchamber where Vesale had shut himself up with his victim, and were just in time to prove that the heart, which had been laid bare, still pulsated.

It is true no one named the gentleman; it is true the heirs, who had an interest in prosecuting the affair, did not make their appearance; but, from the very fact that the accusation was unsustained by proofs, it was received without discussion, and among the enemies of Vesale it was a certainty that he had opened a living man.

This time the outcry was such that it needed nothing less than the stubbornness — the term is not exaggerated — of Philip II. to save Vesale, not from a public trial, but from some ambuscade in which he would have fallen a victim to the popular fury, which pointed the finger at him as an accursed and sacrilegious wretch.

Alas! Philip grew weary, later on, of supporting this martyr of genius. Obliged to quit France, Italy, and Spain, Vesale made a pilgrimage to the tomb of Jesus Christ, and, shipwrecked on his return from the holy places on the island of Zante, he died of misery and hunger!

But at the time we meet him the powerful arm that supported him was not yet weary; and the King of Spain, convinced of the genius of his doctor, sent him, as we have said, to his father-in-law, Henri II.

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XV.

FLORENTINE POLICY.

André Vesale approached the patient, examined him, received from Ambroise Paré an account of the treatment which had been followed, approved of it in all respects, and then asked to see the splinter drawn from the eye of the king by the able surgeon.

Ambroise Paré had, by means of a line on the splinter, indicated how far it had penetrated.

Vesale asked in what way it had penetrated, — horizontally, diagonally, or obliquely.

Ambroise Paré replied that it was obliquely; and, taking the head which he was studying, he thrust the splinter into the eye, up to the spot where it had penetrated in the eye of the king, giving it the exact direction it had before being drawn from the wound.

"Now," said Ambroise Paré, "here is the head. I was just making an opening in it to observe again the sort of damage that would be done by such a stroke in the interior of the brain."

Four men condemned to death had already been decapitated, in order that the surgeons might make the same experiment which Ambroise Paré now proposed renewing in the company of Vesale.

But Vesale, interrupting his *confrère*, said, —

"It is useless; I see by the length of the splinter, and by the direction it has taken, the kind of damage it must have done. There has been a fracture of the right superciliary arch, and of the superior coat of the orbit; penetration with fracture of the bones, and laceration of the

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envelopes of the dura mater, pia mater, and arachnoid, and of the inferior part of the right anterior lobe of the brain; prolongation of the penetration into the superior part of the same lobe, — hence inflammation, then congestion, with extravasation, in all likelihood, in the two anterior lobes."

"It is that exactly!" cried Ambroise Paré, amazed; "the very thing I verified on the heads of the criminals decapitated!"

"Yes," said Vesale, smiling, "less the extravasation, which could not happen, the wound having been made on a dead body."

"Well," asked Paré, "what do you think of the wound?"

"I am certain it is mortal," said Vesale.

A feeble cry was heard behind the anatomist.

Catherine de Médicis, introduced by Comte de Vieilleville, had entered the chamber during the anatomical definition given by Vesale to his *confrère*, and heard the opinion expressed by the former; hence the cry which had attracted the attention of the two surgeons, who, absorbed in this scientific discussion, had neither noticed the presence of the queen.

"Mortal!" murmured Catherine. "You say, monsieur, that the wound is mortal?"

"I believe it is my duty, madame," replied Vesale, "to repeat to your Majesty what I have said to my learned *confrère*, Ambroise Paré. The death of a king is not an ordinary event, and those who inherit an empire need to be warned of the precise hour at which this empire passes from the hands of the dead into those of the living. However painful the intelligence, I must repeat, madame, that the wound of the king is essentially mortal."

The queen passed a handkerchief over her forehead, which was covered with perspiration.

"But," she asked, "is he likely to die without having recovered consciousness?"

Vesale approached the wounded man, took his wrist, and counted the pulsations.

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Then, at the end of a moment, —

"Ninety pulsations," he said to Ambroise Paré.

"In that case, the fever has diminished," replied the latter; "the pulse, in the course of the first two days, had reached a hundred and ten."

"Madame," said Vesale, "if the pulse continues to retrograde in this proportion, and if there is a passing resorption of the extravasation, it is probable that before dying the king may speak once or twice."

"And when?" asked Catherine, anxiously.

"Ah, madame," said Vesale, "you ask of human science more than it knows! However, if we substitute probabilities for certainties, I think the king may recover consciousness about the middle of to-morrow."

"Vieilleville," said the queen, "you hear. The very moment the king returns to life let me know. I must be there, and no other, to hear what the king may be able to say."

About two in the afternoon of the next day the pulse fell to seventy-two, the patient made a slight movement, and sighed feebly.

"M. de Vieilleville," said Vesale, "warn her Majesty the queen-mother; in all probability the king will recover consciousness, and utter a few words."

The grand chamberlain hurried out of the apartment; and when he returned, five minutes after, with the queen, Henri had begun to recover his senses, and was murmuring these words, scarcely intelligible, —

"The queen! Some one fetch the queen!"

"I am here, monseigneur!" cried Catherine, falling on her knees before the bed of Henri II.

Ambroise Paré was regarding, with astonishment, this man, who, if he did not command life and death, appeared, at least, to be initiated into all their secrets.

"Madame," asked Vesale, "does your Majesty wish that M. Paré and I remain in this room, or that we leave?"

The queen questioned the king with her eyes.

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"Let them remain," murmured Henri. "Besides, I am so weak that I fear I may faint at any moment."

Then Vesale made a sign, drew from his pocket a little flask containing a liquor as red as blood, poured a few drops into a silver-gilt spoon, and introduced this liquor between the lips of the king.

Henri breathed a sigh of happiness, and a slight shade of vitality appeared on his cheeks.

"Ah!" said he, "I feel better!"

Then, glancing round, —

"Ah! it is you, Vieilleville," said he; "you have not left me?"

"No, sire," replied the count, sobbing; "not for a single minute!"

"You said it to me — you said it to me!" murmured Henri; "but I did not wish to believe you — I was wrong. Nor would I listen to you either, madame. Do not forget that M. de Coligny is one of my true friends, for he has said more to me than any of you: he named Montgomery as the man fated to kill me."

"He named Montgomery!" cried Catherine. "And how did he know?"

"Ah! by a prophecy made to Charles V. By the way, I hope M. de Montgomery is free?"

Catherine did not answer.

"I hope he is!" returned Henri. "I demand, and, if need be, order that no harm be done to him!"

"Yes, sire," replied Vieilleville, "M. de Montgomery is free; every hour of the day and night he sends to inquire after your Majesty. He is in despair!"

"Let him console himself. Poor De Lorges! he has always faithfully served me, and especially lately, with the Queen-Regent of Scotland."

"Alas!" murmured Catherine, "why did he not stay with her?"

"Madame, it was not his own wish, but an order from the king that brought him back from Scotland. He re-

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fused to tilt against the king; it was an order from me that forced him to do so. My ill fortune has been the cause of everything, not he; let us not, then, rebel against God, but rather profit by the few moments He miraculously leaves us to regulate our most pressing affairs."

"Oh, monseigneur!" murmured Catherine.

"And first," returned Henri, "let us think of the promises made to our friends; then we shall occupy ourselves with the treaties made with our enemies. You know what has been promised to Vieilleville?"

"Yes, sire."

"His patent as Marshal of France was about to be signed when this terrible accident happened; it ought to be ready."

"Yes, sire," replied Vieilleville. "Your Majesty had the goodness to take it in blank to the chancellor, in order to have him sign it on the first opportunity, — and here it is. I had it on me during that fatal 30th of June, and, as since that day I have not undressed nor left the king, it is on me still."

Saying these words, Vieilleville presented the patent to Henri.

"I cannot stir without great pain, madame," said the wounded man to Catherine; "have the goodness to sign the patent for me, dating it from to-day, and inscribing the reason why you sign it in my place, and then give it to my old friend."

Comte de Vieilleville, sobbing, threw himself on his knees, kissing the king's hand, which was as white as the sheet on which it rested.

During this time Catherine was writing at the bottom of the patent of Marshal of France: —

"For the king, wounded, by his order, and near his bed.

"CATHERINE, *Queen.*

"July 4, 1559."

She read and showed the king what she had just written.

"Is that correct, sire?" she asked.

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"Yes, madame," said Henri; "and now give the patent to Vieilleville."

Catherine did so; then, in a whisper, —

"You have the patent," said she; "but do not keep your promise the less on account of that, my good friend, for it might be possible to withdraw it."

"Be tranquil, madame," he returned; "I have given my word, and I do not withdraw that." And, folding his patent carefully, he put it in his pocket.

"And now," said the king, "are the Duke of Savoy and my sister married?"

"No, sire," replied Catherine; "the moment would have been badly chosen for a wedding."

"On the contrary, — on the contrary," replied the king; "and I desire they be married as soon as possible. Vieilleville, go for M. de Savoie and my sister."

Catherine smiled upon the king in sign of assent, and, accompanying Vieilleville to the door, —

"Count," said she, "do not go for M. de Savoie and Madame Marguerite until I open this door again and give you the order myself. Stay in the ante-chamber, and, on your life, liberty, and soul, not a word of the king's return to existence to any one; but, above all, to Madame de Valentinois!"

"Fear nothing, madame," said Vieilleville. And he remained in the neighbouring room, from which the sound of his heavy footfalls might be heard through the closed door, serving to prove the strong emotion of the new marshal.

"Where are you, madame, and what are you doing?" said the king. "I do not wish to lose any time."

"I am here, sire. I was telling M. de Vieilleville where he might find the Duke of Savoy if he did not meet him at his residence."

"Why should he not be at his residence?"

"He will be there. It is only in the evening that he quits his château, and he is always back by dawn."

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"Ah!" said the king, with a sigh of envy, "there was also a time when I, too, used to canter along the roads on a good steed, during the fine nights: *Per amica silentia lunæ*, as my little daughter-in-law Mary Stuart says. It was sweet to feel the fresh breeze, sweet to see the foliage tremble under the pale light of the moon! Ah! no fever then burned me! Have pity on me, O my God! for, ah, I suffer much!"

During this time Catherine had drawn near the bed; but, as she did so, she made a sign to the two doctors to retire from it.

Ambroise Paré and Vesale replied by a respectful inclination; and, understanding that these two princes of this world had some great secret to discuss at the moment one was about to leave the other, they retired to a window beyond the reach of their voices.

Catherine had resumed her place by the king.

"Well," said Henri, "they are coming, are they not?"

"Yes, sire; but before they come will your Majesty allow me to say a few words on matters of state?"

"Do so, madame," answered the king, "although I am very tired, and I now see the things of this world only through a cloud."

"No matter! no matter! God will light up the cloud through which you see them, and perhaps permit you to pass a safer judgment on them than when you were in health!"

Henri turned painfully towards Catherine, and regarded her with an eye gleaming with fever and intelligence.

It could be seen he was making a mighty effort to place his weakness on a level with that Florentine subtlety whose tortuous profundity he had often occasion to appreciate.

"Speak, madame," he said.

"Pardon, sire," returned Catherine. "It is not my opinion, it is not that of the doctors, who have always good hopes; but it is yours, is it not, that your life is in serious danger?"

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"I am mortally wounded, madame," said the king; "and it is doubtless by a miracle that God permits me to have this last conversation with you."

"Well, sire, if it is a miracle, let us utilise that miracle, to show that the Lord has not wrought it uselessly."

"I am listening to you, madame," said Henri.

"Sire, do you recall what M. de Guise said to you in my apartment, at the moment you were about to sign the unhappy treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis?"

"Yes, madame."

"M. de Guise is a great friend of France."

"Tush!" murmured the king; "a Lorrainer!"

"But, sire," said Catherine, "I am not a Lorrainer."

"No," said Henri, "you are a—"

He stopped.

"Finish," said the queen. "I am a Florentine, and consequently a true ally of the House of France. Well, I tell you, sire, that Lorrainer and Florentine have been, on this occasion, more French than certain Frenchmen."

"I do not say you are wrong," murmured Henri.

"The Lorrainer and Florentine said to you: 'Sire, such a treaty might, at the most, be acceptable to you, if it were proposed the day after the battle of Saint-Laurent or the capture of Saint-Quentin; but to-day, when M. de Guise has arrived from Italy, when we have regained possession of Calais, when we can reckon an army of fifty thousand well-armed men, besides thirty thousand in garrison in our fortresses, such a treaty is a mockery!' That is what the Lorrainer and Florentine said to you, and what you did not wish to hear."

"It is true," said Henri, as if returning from a reverie, "and I have been wrong."

"Then you acknowledge it?" said Catherine, her eyes sparkling.

"Yes, I acknowledge it—but it is too late!"

"It is never too late, sire!" replied the Florentine.

"I do not understand you," said the king.

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"Will you let me act?" replied Catherine; "will you place your reliance on me, and I will restore you all your French cities; I will restore you Piedmont, Nice, La Bresse, and open the way to the Milanese?"

"And, in return for this, what must be done, madame, if you please?"

"You must, in spite of the majority of the dauphin, say that, considering his feeble health and inexperience, you name a Council of Regency, to last a year, and longer, if necessary, composed of M. de Guise, the Cardinal de Lorraine, and myself, and with power to regulate, during that year, all civil, political, religious, and other affairs."

"And what will François say?"

"He will be delighted. He thinks of nothing but the happiness of being the husband of his little Scotch girl, and has no other ambition."

"Yes," said Henri, "it is a great happiness to be young, and to be the husband of the woman one loves!"

And he sighed.

"But there is one thing," he continued, "that renders all that of no avail: it is that he is King of France; and a King of France must think of his country before thinking of his loves."

Catherine gave a sidelong look at Henri; she was strongly tempted to say to him, "Why hast thou, O king, who givest such good advice, not followed it?"

But she feared to recall to his mind the remembrance of Madame de Valentinois, and she was silent, or rather continued to direct the conversation into the channel where she had first led it.

"And then, if I am regent, M. de Guise lieutenant-general, M. de Lorraine administrator of the finances, we can take charge of everything."

"Of everything! — What do you mean by these words, 'take charge of everything'?"

"Break everything, sire! recover the one hundred and

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ninety-eight cities, — Piedmont, La Bresse, Nice, Savoy, the Milanese."

"Yes," said the king; "and, meanwhile, I shall present myself before my God charged with perjury, making my death the pretext for not keeping my promise! It is too great a sin, madame; I shall not risk it. If I were to live, I do not say — I might have time to repent!"

Then, raising his voice, —

"M. de Vieilleville!" said he.

"What are you doing?" said she.

"I am calling for M. de Vieilleville, who very surely has not gone for the Duke of Savoy."

"And why do you call him?"

"In order that he may go."

In fact, Vieilleville, who heard the call, returned on the moment.

"M. de Vielleville," said the king, "you have done well to wait for a second order before going to M. de Savoie, since the queen desired you to wait; I give you this second order. — Go, then, immediately, and in five minutes let M. de Savoie and Madame Marguerite be here!"

Then, as he felt himself growing weaker, he looked around him, and, perceiving the two doctors, who, on hearing Henri's voice, had drawn near to each other, —

"Just now," said he, "some one forced me to drink a few drops of a liquor that has revived me. I want to live an hour longer; bring me a few more drops of that liquor."

Vesale took the silver-gilt spoon, poured out five or six drops of the crimson beverage, and, while Ambroise Paré raised the head of the dying prince, passing his hands behind his ears, he glided them between his lips.

However, M. de Vieilleville, not daring to disobey the commands of the king, went for the Duke of Savoy and Madame Marguerite.

Catherine, standing by the bedside, was smiling on the king, with rage in her heart.

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XVI.

A KING HAS ONLY HIS WORD.

Five minutes after, Emmanuel Philibert entered by one door, and Marguerite by another.

A flash of joy passed across the faces of the two young people on seeing the king restored to life.

In fact, thanks to the drops which Henri had just swallowed, there was, in comparison to the lethargic state in which they had left him, a remarkable improvement.

Catherine took a step backwards, to yield the place she held near the bed to Emmanuel and Marguerite.

Both knelt before the dying king.

"It is good," said Henri, regarding them with a gentle and sad smile; "you look well thus, my children. Remain, then, where you are."

"Oh, sire!" said Emmanuel, "what hope!"

"Oh, my brother!" said Marguerite, "what happiness!"

"Yes," said Henri, "it is a happiness, and I thank God for it; I have regained consciousness. But there is no hope. Let us not, therefore, count on what cannot be, but rather act like people in a hurry. Emmanuel, take the hand of my sister."

Emmanuel obeyed; the hand of Marguerite, it is true, had just travelled half the way to meet his.

"Prince," continued Henri, "I desired your marriage with my sister when I was well. To-day, that I am dying, I do more than desire it, I command it."

"Sire!" exclaimed the Duke of Savoy.

"My good brother!" said Marguerite, kissing his hand.

"Listen," returned Henri, "listen, Emmanuel," — and there was an overpowering solemnity in his voice, — "not only are you now a great prince, thanks to the provinces

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I have restored to you; a noble gentleman, thanks to your ancestors, but you are an honest man, thanks to your upright mind and generous heart. Emmanuel, it is to the honest man I address myself."

Emmanuel Philibert raised his noble head; the loyalty of his soul shone in his eyes, and in that sweet and firm voice which was peculiar to him, —

"Speak, sire!" he said.

"Emmanuel," said Henri, "a peace has just been signed; this peace is disadvantageous to France —"

Emmanuel made a movement.

"But that does not matter, since it is signed," continued the king. "This peace makes you the ally of France and Spain at the same time: you are King Philip's cousin, but you are going to be the uncle of François II. Your sword is to-day a great weight in the balance in which God weighs the destinies of nations; it is the sword that has made an opening in our ranks at the battle of Saint-Laurent; it is the sword that has overturned the ramparts of Saint-Quentin. Well, I adjure that sword to be as just as its master is loyal, as terrible as its master is courageous. If the peace sworn between me and King Philip II. is broken by France, let that sword turn against France; if that peace is broken by Spain, let it turn against Spain. If the place of constable was vacant, God is my witness that I would give it to you, as the prince who has married my sister, as the knight who defends the marches of my realm; unfortunately this post is held by a man from whom I ought to withdraw it, perhaps, but who, on the whole, has served me, or believed he served me, loyally. No matter. Justice and right are the only ties that bind you; now, if justice and right are for France, your arm and your sword for France. If justice and right are for Spain, your arm and your sword against France. Do you swear this, Duke of Savoy?"

Emmanuel Philibert stretched out his hand towards Henri.

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"By the loyal heart," said he, "that appeals to my loyalty, I swear it!"

Henri breathed again.

"Thanks!" said he.

Then, after a moment during which he appeared to be mentally thanking God, —

"And now," he resumed, "on what day are the necessary formalities for your marriage, which have been delayed until to-day, to be accomplished?"

"On the 9th of July, sire."

"Well, swear to me again that, whether I am alive or dead, near my bed or on my tomb, your marriage will be celebrated on the 9th of July."

Marguerite cast a quick glance at Emmanuel, — a glance in which lay hidden a remnant of anxiety.

But he, drawing the head of Marguerite close to his own, and kissing her on the brow, as he might have done a sister, —

"Sire," said he, "receive this second oath, as you have done the first. I pronounce them both with equal solemnity, and may God inflict an equal punishment on me, if I fail in one or the other!"

Marguerite turned pale, and seemed ready to faint.

At this moment the door opened very slowly, as if the hand that moved it was very timid and hesitating, and the head of the dauphin looked into the chamber.

"Who enters?" asked the king, all whose senses were marked by that sharpness peculiar to invalids.

"Oh, my father speaks!" cried François, losing all his timidity, and he ran into the room.

The face of the king brightened.

"Yes, my son," answered Henri; "and you are welcome in this chamber, for I have something important to say to you."

Then, to the Duke of Savoy, —

"Emmanuel," he continued, "you have just embraced my sister, who is going to be your wife; embrace my son, who will be your nephew."

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The duke took the boy in his arms, pressed him tenderly against his breast, and kissed him on both cheeks.

"You will remember your two oaths, brother," said the king.

"Yes, sire, and one as faithfully as the other, I swear it to you!"

"'T is well; now leave me alone with the dauphin."

Emmanuel and Marguerite retired.

But Catherine remained in the same place.

"Well?" said the king, addressing her.

"Am I also to retire, sire?" demanded Catherine.

"Yes, madame, you also."

"When the king desires to see me again, he will recall me," said the Florentine.

"This conversation finished, you can return, madame, whether I call you or not. But," he added with a sad smile, "it is probable I shall not have you called, for I feel myself growing weaker. Nevertheless, come always."

Catherine started to go out directly, but doubtless she reflected, and, describing a curve, she bowed down over the bed and kissed the hand of the king.

Then she departed, leaving behind her, in the chamber of the dying, if we may so express ourselves, a prolonged look of anxiety.

Though the king heard the door close on Catherine, he still waited a moment; then addressing the dauphin, —

"Your mother is no longer there, François?" he asked.

"No, sire," replied the dauphin.

"Bolt the door, and return promptly to the bedside, for I feel my strength leaving me."

François hastened to obey; he pushed the bolt, and returning near the king, —

"Oh, my God, sire!" said he, "you are very pale. What can I do to aid you?"

"Call the doctor first," said Henri.

"Messieurs," said François, turning to the two physicians, "come quick; the king is calling you."

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Vesale and Ambroise Paré drew near the bed.

"You see!" said Vesale to his *confrère*, whom he had doubtless warned of the approaching death of the king.

"Messieurs," said Henri, "strength! strength! give me strength!"

"Sire," replied Vesale, hesitating.

"Have you no more of that elixir?" asked the dying man.

"Yes, I have some, sire."

"Well?"

"This liquor gives only an artificial strength."

"Well, what matter, provided only that it be strength?"

"And perhaps its abuse may shorten the days of your Majesty."

"Monsieur," returned the king, "the question is no longer as to the duration of my days. All I ask is to be able to say to the dauphin what I have to say to him, and then die at the last word."

"Sire, an order of your Majesty — but it was with some hesitation already that I gave you this liquor a second time."

"Give me this elixir a third time, monsieur," said the king; "I will it!"

And his head sank back on the pillow, and his eyes closed, and so deadly a paleness spread over his cheeks that one would have thought him about to expire.

"My father is dying! my father is dying!" exclaimed François.

"Make haste, André," said Ambroise; "the king is very bad!"

"The king has still three or four hours to live; do not be afraid," replied Vesale.

And, without using the silver-gilt spoon, he let some drops of the elixir drop on the half-open mouth of the king.

The effect was slower this time than before, but it was not less efficacious.

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Some seconds had hardly elapsed when the muscles of his face shivered, the blood appeared to circulate anew under the skin, the teeth parted, and the eyes opened, glassy at first, then gradually growing brighter.

The king drew a breath, or rather sighed.

"Ah," said he, "thanks be to God!"

And he glanced round for the dauphin.

"Here I am!" said François, on his knees before the bed, and drawing towards the pillow.

"Paré," said the king, "raise me with pillows, and put my arm round the neck of the dauphin, so that I may support myself on him in descending the last step of the tomb."

The two practitioners were still near the king; then with that ability which the anatomical knowledge of the human body gives, Vesale slipped the cushions of a sofa behind the pillows, raised Henri so as to place him sitting, while Ambroise Paré placed around the dauphin's neck the king's arm, to which paralysis was already giving the coldness and heaviness of death.

Then both discreetly retired.

The king made an effort, and the lips of the father touched those of the child.

"Father!" murmured the boy, while two big tears coursed down his cheeks.

"My son," said the king, "you are sixteen, you are a man; and I am going to speak to you as to a man."

"Sire!"

"I say more: you are a king, — for am I now of any account in the world? — and I am going to speak to you as to a king."

"Speak, my father," said the young man.

"My son," said Henri, "I have committed through weakness, never through hatred or malice, many faults during my life."

François made a movement.

"Let me speak. It is fitting I should confess to you,

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my successor, in order that you may avoid the faults into which I have fallen."

"These faults, my father, do not exist," said the dauphin; "it is not you who have committed them."

"No, my child; but it is I who am answerable for them before God and before men. One of the last and greatest was committed at the instigation of the constable and Madame de Valentinois. I had a bandage over my eyes; I was insensate, — I ask your pardon, my son."

"Oh, sire! sire!" cried the dauphin.

"This fault is the peace signed with Spain, — it is the abandonment of Piedmont, Nice, Savoy, and the Milanese, of a hundred and ninety-eight strong places, in exchange for which France receives only Saint-Quentin, Ham, and Le Catelet. You are listening?"

"Yes, my father."

"Just now your mother was there; she reproached me for this fault, and she offered to repair it — "

"How could that be," said the dauphin, with a start, "since your word is pledged?"

"Good, François! good!" said Henri; "yes, the fault is great, but my word is pledged. François, whatever they may say to you, whatever seductions they may employ or motives they may adduce; though a woman should beseech you in her boudoir; though a priest should adjure you in the confessional; though by the aid of magic they should evoke my phantom to make you believe that the order comes from me, — my son, on the honour of my name, which is the brightness of yours, change nothing in the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, disastrous though it be. Change nothing, because it is disastrous especially, and keep always, in your mouth and in your heart, this maxim of King John, A king of France has but his word!'"

"Father," said François, "I swear, by the honour of your name, it shall be as you desire."

"If your mother insists?"

"I shall tell her I am your son as well as hers."

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"If she orders?"

"I shall answer that I am king, and that it is for me to give orders, not to receive them."

And, while saying these words, the young prince drew himself up with all that majesty peculiar to the Valois.

"Good, my son!" replied Henri, "good! this is what I had to tell you. And now adieu! I feel that I am growing weak, I feel my eyes closing, and my voice dying away. My son, repeat over my motionless body the same oath you have just taken, so that you may be at the same time pledged to the living and the dead. Then, when the oath is taken, and I unconscious, and therefore dead, you may let your mother enter. Adieu, François! adieu, my son! embrace your father for the last time. Sire, you are King of France!"

And the head of Henri fell back motionless on the pillow.

François followed with his supple body, as flexible as a reed, the movement of the body of his father; then rising and solemnly laying his hand upon that body, which might from that moment be considered a corpse,—

"Father," said he, "I renew to you my oath to keep faithfully the peace sworn to, disastrous though it be for France! to neither take from, nor add to the treaty of Cateau-Cambrésis, no matter what pressure is brought to bear upon me, no matter who is the person that urges me! God receive my oath as you have received it. 'A king of France has only his word!'"

And, having kissed for the last time the pale and cold lips of his father, he opened for Queen Catherine, whom he found standing rigid and motionless behind the door, waiting impatiently for the end of this conversation at which she was not allowed to be present.

On the 9th of July following, beside the bed of the king, in whom there was still some life, although its presence was detected only by a slight breathing which hardly tarnished the mirror, Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy

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took solemnly for wife Marguerite of France, Duchesse de Berry, the Cardinal de Lorraine officiating and all the court attending this ceremony, which was to be completed by the glare of torches a little after midnight in the church of Saint-Paul.

About four in the afternoon of the following day, — that is to say, at the very hour when he had been so unfortunately struck by Comte Montgomery, — the king breathed forth the last sigh without effort or convulsion, just as André Vesale had predicted.

He was forty years, three months, and ten days old, and had reigned twelve years and three months.

He had one merit more than his father: dead, he kept that faith towards Philip II. which, living, his father had not kept to Charles V.

The same day Madame de Valentinois, who had remained at the palace of Les Tournelles until the last sigh of the king, left this palace and retired to her château of Anet.

The same evening all the court returned to the Louvre. The two doctors and four priests alone remained near the royal corpse, — the doctors to embalm him, the priests to pray for him.

At the street gate, Catherine de Médicis and Mary Stuart met.

Catherine, following a habit contracted since eighteen years, was about to pass first; but suddenly she stopped, and giving way to Mary Stuart, —

"Pass, madame," she said with a sigh; "you are the queen."

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XVII.

WHERE THE TREATY IS EXECUTED.

Henri II. died like a true king of France, rising from his bed of agony to ratify his promises.

On the 3d of July, 1559, letters patent were issued restoring his states to Emmanuel Philibert.

The prince immediately sent, for the purpose of giving effect to this restoration, three of the lords who were the most faithful to him in his evil fortunes. They were his lieutenant-general in Piedmont, Amédée de Valpergue, his lieutenant-general in Savoy, Marshal of Chatam, and his lieutenant-general in Bresse, Philibert de la Beaume, lord of Montfalconnet.

This fidelity of Henri II. to his word exasperated the whole nobility of France, of whom Brantôme makes himself the organ.

"The matter," says the chronicler, "was put to deliberation and strongly debated in the council: some affirmed that François II. was not obliged to fulfil the engagements sworn to by his father, particularly in relation to an inferior power; others were in favour of waiting till the majority of the king; they said that the Duchess of Savoy had already brought only too many advantages to her husband, and that the establishment of ten daughters of France would have cost less to the crown.

"For," adds the Sire de Brantôme, "from great to great there is only the hand, but not from great to little. It is for the great to exact; it is for the little to be contented with what the great condescends to assign it, and the strongest is bound to regulate itself only by its own right and convenience."

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A large and easy code of morality, as may be seen, and if it is practised in our days a veil at least is thrown over the theory.

It was natural, therefore, that the French, who had held Piedmont for twenty years, should have all the difficulty imaginable in giving it up, and should almost revolt against the orders of the court.

Three successive commands had to be sent to Maréchal de Bourdillon before he would evacuate the places of security, and before consigning them to the Piedmontese officers, he required that the order should be enregistered by the parliament.

As to Emmanuel Philibert, whatever might be his desire to return to his states, he was still retained in France by certain indispensable duties.

First, he had to go to Brussels to take leave of King Philip II., and surrender the government of the Low Countries, which he held from him.

Philip appointed his natural sister, Margaret of Austria, Duchess of Parma, to succeed the Duke of Savoy; then considering that he had been too long absent from Spain, he decided to return to his native country with his young spouse.

Emmanuel Philibert did not wish to abandon Philip II. until, to use his own expression, there was no land left on which to follow him; so he accompanied him as far as Middlebourg, where the king embarked on the 25th of August.

Emmanuel Philibert then returned to Paris to be present at the coronation of the young king.

The young king set out for the château of Villers-Cotterets with all his court, under the pretext of living retired, but, in reality, to amuse himself at his ease. Fathers who leave a throne as an inheritance are seldom regretted long.

"The king," says M. de Montpleinchamp, one of the historians of Emmanuel Philibert, "went to the château of Villers-Cotterets *to divert himself*, and took with him the Duke of Savoy, his uncle, who fell ill there of fever."

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The château of Villers-Cotterets, begun by François I., had just been finished by Henri II., and there may still be seen to-day, on the façade facing the church, the cipher of King Henri II. and Catherine de Médicis, an H. and a K., — Catherine was then written with a K., — surrounded by the three crescents of Diane de Poitiers; singular alliance! Less singular, however, in this epoch than in ours, of the adjunction of the mistress to the conjugal life.

The good Princess Marguerite, who adored her fair Duke of Savoy, acted as his nurse, not allowing him to take anything from any hand but hers. Luckily, the fever that held him under was only a fever caused by fatigue and sombre regrets. Emmanuel Philibert had regained possession of his royal duchy, but he had lost the heart of his heart; Leona had returned to Savoy, and was waiting, at the village of Oleggio, for that 17th of November which was to reunite them each year.

At last, the powerful fairy whom men call youth conquered fatigue and sorrow; the fever took flight on a last ray of the summer's sun, and on the 21st of September, Duke Emmanuel was able to accompany to Rheims the young king and queen, — François and Mary Stuart had just thirty-four years between them, — and assist at the ceremony of their coronation.

At the moment when God let His eyes rest on him whom the holy oil made His elect, He must surely have taken pity on that king who was to live only a year, then to die in a mysterious manner, and on that queen who was to remain a prisoner for twenty years, then to die a bloody death.

In another book, of which the first chapters are already written,[1] we intend depicting this reign of four months and twenty-five days, during which so many events took place.

As soon as the king was crowned and led back to Paris,

[1] "The Horoscope."

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Emmanuel Philibert found himself in some sort freed from his obligations to these two crowned heads, and he took leave of his nephew of France as he had taken leave of his cousin of Spain, in order to return into his states, from which he had been absent so many years.

The Duchess Marguerite accompanied her spouse as far as Lyons; but there she separated from him. The condition of this poor duchy of Savoy after a foreign occupation of twenty-three years was surely likely to be very deplorable, and Duke Emmanuel was naturally anxious that his country should assume a somewhat orderly appearance before he showed it to his spouse; then, it must be said, the month of November was approaching, and ever since Leona had quitted Emmanuel at Écouen, Emmanuel had his eye riveted on that luminous point of the 17th of November, as in a sad and sombre night the pilot has his eye riveted on the only star that shines in his sky.

Scianca-Ferro led back the duchess to Paris; and the duke, after a run to La Bresse, returned to Lyons, embarked on the Rhone, where he was near perishing in a tempest, then, having landed at Avignon, he made his way to Marseilles, where a company of Savoyard lords was waiting for him brought thither by André de Provana.

This brave company, composed of gentlemen who had remained faithful to the duke, was too impatient to greet the duke to wait for him on their lands.

In the midst of the festivals celebrated by Marseilles in honour of the Duke of Savoy, a circumstance occurred which proved that he was not forgotten by his royal nephew. François II. sent his uncle the order of Saint-Michael, — for that matter, not a very rare present; the King of France had just given it, a little at hap-hazard, to eighteen persons, among whom were twelve whose merit might be disputed. "So they called this collar," says the historian from whom we have borrowed these details, "*the beasts' collar!*" But with his usual courtesy Emmanuel took and kissed it, saying, —

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"All that comes from my nephew is dear to me; all that comes from the King of France is precious to me."

And he immediately hung it round his neck, near the collar of the Golden Fleece, as a sign that there was no difference between the gifts that came from the King of France and those that came from the King of Spain.

At Marseilles, the duke embarked for Nice, — Nice, the only city that remained to him when he had lost all the others, or when all the others had abandoned him. It is true that Nice means victory; so the writers of the time, great wits every one of them, did not fail to say that amid all his misfortunes *Victory* remained faithful to Emmanuel Philibert.

It ought to have filled Emmanuel with great joy and at the same time with great pride to return as a man and as a victorious prince to that castle which he had of yore entered as a child and a fugitive. But we do not care to make an attempt at telling what was passing within him; to do so would be to give a history of the sensations, and we are not acquainted with any historian clever enough to accomplish such a task successfully.

There only, and by the relations of the faithful servants he had kept in Piedmont, La Bresse, and Savoy, he had an exact account of the situation of these three provinces; the country was in ruins.

The Transalpine provinces, hemmed in by the French territory, were entirely opened up and cut in two by the appanage of the Duc de Nemours, who was attached to France.

This was a relic of the policy of François I. François I., in order to detach from Charles III., Emmanuel's father, even his nearest relatives, invited to his court Charles's younger brother Philip, whose appanage embraced almost the half of Savoy. Then he married him to Charlotte of Orléans and invested him with the duchy of Nemours. The reader will remember having seen at Saint-Germain Jacques de Nemours, son of Philip, and will also remember that he was entirely devoted to the interests of France.

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On the other hand, the Bernese and Valaisians contested with Emmanuel the possessions they had taken from his father on the banks of Lake Leman; and as their claims were sustained by Geneva, a nursery of heresy and independence, it was evident he would have to treat with them.

Moreover, Piedmont, La Bresse, and Savoy had no strong fortresses, the French having destroyed such as gave them trouble, and having preserved only the citadels of the five cities which they were to garrison until the Duchess of Savoy had a son. Moreover, it was the French who imposed the taxes, and who collected them; therefore no financial resources of any sort whatsoever were in existence, even the furniture of the ducal palaces was in a dilapidated condition, and as to his crown jewels, the prince had long ago turned them into money; however, he intended to recover them some day.

To make head against this impoverished state of affairs, all the duke possessed on returning to his states was some five or six hundred thousand gold crowns, coming partly from the dowry of Princess Marguerite, and partly from the ransoms of Montmorency and Dandelot.

Besides, absence and misfortune, those two great dissolvents of all duty and of all devotion, had produced their ordinary effect; the nobles, who had not seen Emmanuel since he was a child, had forgotten their prince, and become accustomed to live as a free confederation. Such things were common enough in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries even in the states of monarchs who were respected and obeyed; how much more were they expected to prevail in the territories of those who, impotent to protect themselves, could not protect others!

We can understand, therefore, why it was, for instance, that Philippe de Comines abandoned the Duke of Burgundy for Louis XI.; that Tanneguy du Châtel and Vicomte de Rohan, subjects of the Duke of Brittany, passed over to the side of France, while Durfé, a subject of the King of France, became a follower of the Duke of Brittany.

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Furthermore, a great number of these gentlemen, while remaining Savoyards, had become pensionaries of King François or King Philip, and wore the scarf of France or of Spain; in fine, ingratitude, like a leprosy of the heart, had seized on the great, while there was indifference and forgetfulness among the little.

The reason for this was that the towns of Piedmont had by little and little grown accustomed to the presence of the French. The conquerors, indeed, had shown themselves very moderate; they levied only such contributions as were actually necessary to them, and as they did not establish any local police, every one could live as he liked. Most of the offices were salable; and the magistrates, being in a hurry to recover the amounts they had paid, did not repress, or repressed only very feebly, a system of rapine of which they themselves gave the example.

Brantôme has this to say on the same subject: —

"During the time of Louis XI. and François I., there was in Italy neither king's lieutenant nor governor of province who did not deserve, after remaining two or three years in his office, to have his head chopped off for his extortions and rapacity. The state of Milan would have been peacefully assured to us but for the great oppression and the great wrongs that were committed there, and we lost everything!"

It resulted that all who had remained attached to the government of their native princes were oppressed or in obscurity, since to remain attached to Emmanuel Philibert, general of the Austrian, Flemish, and Spanish armies against France, was naturally to regard the French occupation as oppressive and hostile.

The few days Emmanuel spent at Nice were holidays: children seeing again a father after a long absence, a father seeing again the children he had believed lost, could not express their joy and love in a more tender fashion. Emmanuel deposited in the treasury of the citadel three hundred thousand crowns of gold destined to raise the

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ramparts of the city, and to found, on that rocky crest which separates the port of Villafranca from that of Limpia, the château of Montalban, which, on account of its smallness, the Venetian ambassador Lipomano called the model in relief of a citadel. Then he set out for Coni, — the town which, with Nice, had been most faithful to him, and which, having no artillery, had some cast at its own expense, in order to be able to cling to its prince. Emmanuel rewarded it by quartering his blazon with the white cross of Savoy, and permitting its inhabitants to bear the title of citizen, instead of that of bourgeois.

Another subject also engaged his most serious attention: just as France had her Huguenots, who were soon to give rude shocks to the thrones of François II. and Charles IX., so Emmanuel was confronted by the religious sect which dwelt in the Piedmontese Alps.

Geneva had adopted Lutheranism in 1535, and became soon after the capital of the disciples of Calvin; but the Israel of the Alps had existed since the tenth century.

About the middle of this tenth century, which, according to tradition, was to be the last of the world, and the half of the human race was uttering one mighty cry of terror at the approach of universal agony, a number of Christian families, connected with the Paulicians, a division of the Manichæans, had come from the east and spread over Italy, where they left traces of themselves under the name of *Paterini*, and penetrated into the valleys of Pragelas, Lucerne, and Saint-Martin.

There, in the depths of those remote gorges, they took root like wild flowers, and lived pure and unknown in the clefts of their rocks, which they believed inaccessible; their soul was free as that of the bird which cleaves the azure sky, their conscience white as the snow on the summits of Mount Rosa and Mount Viso, those European brothers of Tabor and Sinai. The Paterini did not recognise any of the modern heresiarchs as their founder: they claimed the doctrines of the primitive Church had been

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preserved by them in all their purity; the ark of the Lord, they said, rested on the mountains where they dwelt, and while the Roman Church was submerged under a deluge of errors, among them only had the divine torch remained a fire. Consequently, they entitled themselves not *reformed*, but *reformers*.

And, in fact, this church, with its austere morality and its robe seamless as that of Christ, — this church had religiously preserved the spirit, rites, usages, of the early Christians. The gospel was its law; the worship flowing from that law — the least complicated of all human cults — was the bond of a fraternal community whose members met only to love and pray. Their crime, — for, in order to persecute them, it was necessary to find in them a crime, — their crime consisted in their holding that Constantine, by endowing the popes with great wealth, had corrupted Christian society. They based their belief on these words issuing from the mouth of Christ, "The Son of man has not where to lay his head!" and on these, "It is harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven than for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle!" This crime drew on them the rigours of an institution then newly established, which is now known as the Inquisition.

Massacres and the stake tried them for four centuries, — for it was from them that the Albigenses in Languedoc, the Hussites in Bohemia, the Vaudois in Apulia, drew their origin; but nothing could relax their faith, or even their spirit of proselytism. Their missionaries travelled incessantly, not only to visit their infant churches, but to found new ones. Their principal apostles were: Valdo of Lyons, who gave them the name of *Vaudois;* then the famous Bérenger; then Ludovico Pasquale, a preacher in Calabria; then Giovanni of Lucerne, a preacher in Genoa; finally, several brothers named Molines, sent to catechise in Bohemia, Hungary, and Dalmatia.

At first, the Savoyard princes saw in the Vaudois only an isolated, inoffensive little people of gentle manners and

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pure doctrine. But when such great upsetters of systems and disturbers of ideas as Luther and Calvin arrived, and the Vaudois united with them, the Vaudois, a branch of the immense tree of the Reformation, ceased to be a sect in the Church, and became a party in the state.

During the misfortunes of Charles III. they had, as we have said, spread through the valleys of Pragelas, Lucerne, and Saint-Martin, and had gained a great number of partisans in the plain and even in the cities of Piedmont, as well as in Chieri, Avignon, and Turin; consequently, François I., the ally of the Turks of Constantinople and of the German Protestants, ordered the Senate of Turin in 1534 to pass the most severe and rigorous laws against them, and his military commanders to second the Inquisition enforcing the Vaudois to hear Mass or leave the country.

There was, then, the greatest agitation in the Vaudois valleys when Emmanuel Philibert arrived, on the 16th of November, at Verceil, — one of the castles, it will be remembered, in which his childhood had been passed.

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XVIII.

THE 17TH OF NOVEMBER.

On the morning of the 17th of November a cavalier, muffled in a large cloak, leaped from the saddle at the door of a little house in Oleggio, and received in his arms a woman, half fainting with joy and happiness.

The cavalier was Emmanuel Philibert; the woman was Leona.

Although five months had hardly elapsed since Emmanuel had quitted Leona at Écouen, an immense change had taken place in the young woman. It was the change wrought in a flower, which, accustomed to the sunlight, has been suddenly transported to the shade; the change wrought in the bird, that free musician of the air, when suddenly shut up in a cage: the flower would lose its colour, the bird its song.

The cheeks of Leona had grown pale, her eyes sad, her voice grave.

The first moments given to the happiness of seeing each other again, the first words exchanged with the foolish lavishness of joy, Emmanuel regarded his love with an air of anxiety: the hand of sorrow had been placed on her face, and left its fatal impress there.

She smiled at the questioning look of the prince.

"I see what you are in search of, my beloved Emmanuel: you are in search of the page of the Duke of Savoy, the joyous companion of Nice and Hesdin; you are in search of Leone!"

Emmanuel heaved a sigh.

"The latter," she continued, with a smile of deep sadness, "is dead, and you will never see him more. But

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his sister Leona remains, and to her he has bequeathed his love and devotion for you!"

"Oh, what does it matter?" exclaimed Emmanuel; "it is Leona I love; it is Leona I shall always love!"

"Love her very quickly, then, and very tenderly," said the young woman, with the same sad smile.

"And why so?" asked Emmanuel.

"My father died young; my mother, too, died young; and in a year I shall have reached the years of my mother!"

Emmanuel, shuddering, pressed her against his heart; then, in an altered voice, —

"But what is that you are saying, Leona?" he cried.

"Nothing terrifying, my love, now that I know that God permits the dead to watch over the living!"

"No, I do not understand you, Leona," said Emmanuel, who was beginning to be seriously disturbed by the dreamy, abstracted look of the young woman.

"How many hours can you give me, my beloved?" asked Leona.

"Oh, the whole day! the whole night! Was it not agreed that once a year you would belong to me for twenty-four hours?"

"Yes. Well, I shall defer till to-morrow what I have to say to you! Till then, my beloved, let us live in the past. But, alas!" she added, with a sigh, "that past is my future!" And she made a sign to Emmanuel to follow her.

Having taken up her dwelling a little time before in the village of Oleggio, in this house which she had bought, and which she had erected into a tabernacle rather than furnished as a house, she was still unknown to every one; Emmanuel Philibert, who had not returned to Piedmont since childhood, was still more unknown than she.

The peasants gazed, then, on this fine young man of scarcely thirty, and on this fine young woman, apparently twenty-five, without suspecting that they were looking on

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the prince who held the well-being of Piedmont in his hands, and on one who held the heart of the prince in hers.

Where were they going?

It was Leona who was conducting Emmanuel.

From time to time she stopped; and, approaching a group, —

"Listen!" said she to Emmanuel.

Then she questioned the peasants.

"What are you talking about, my friends?"

And they would answer, —

"What else could we talk about, fair lady, except the return of our prince to his states?"

Thereupon, Emmanuel took part in the conversation.

"What do you think of him?" he asked.

"What could we think of him?" they said. "We do not know him!"

"You know him by fame?" said Leona.

"Yes, as a brave captain. But what good are brave captains to us? The men who make war on one another to sustain their reputation are brave captains; and war means barrenness for our fields, depopulation for our villages, and mourning for our wives and daughters!"

And Leona looked upon Emmanuel with eyes full of entreaty.

"You understand?" she murmured.

"Then what you desire from your prince, my good people, is — ?"

"That he rid us of the foreigner; that he give us back peace and justice!"

"In the name of the duke," said Leona, "I promise you all this; for Duke Emmanuel Philibert is not only a brave captain, as you say, but is also a great heart!"

"In that case," cried the peasants, "long live our young Duke Emmanuel Philibert!"

The prince pressed Leona to his heart; for, like a second Egeria, she made known to this second Numa the true desires of his people.

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"Oh!" said he, "why cannot I, my darling Leona, make the tour of my states with you in this fashion!"

And Leona smiled sadly.

"I will be always with you!" she murmured.

And then, in a tone so low that she alone and God could hear it, —

"And much more even than now," she added, "later on!"

They left the village.

"I would have wished, my beloved," said Leona, "to conduct you where we are going, over a pathway covered with flowers; but, as you see, both heaven and earth are in sympathy with the anniversary which we celebrate to-day: the earth is sad and bereaved, — it represents death; the sun is bright, yet gentle, — it represents life; — death, which is fleeting as the winter; life, which is eternal as the sun! Do you recognise the spot where you found death and life together?"

Emmanuel Philibert looked around him, and uttered a cry: he recognised the place where he had twenty-five years before found, near a stream, a woman, dead, and a child almost dead.

"Ah! it was here, was it not?" he cried.

"Yes," replied Leona, smiling; "it was indeed here!"

Emmanuel took his poniard, cut a branch of willow, and planted it on the spot where the mother of Leona had lain.

"There," said he, "shall rise a chapel to our Lady of Mercy."

"And the Mother of Sorrows," added Leona.

Then she set about gathering some late autumn flowers, on the bank of the stream; whilst Emmanuel, grave and pensive, leaning against the willow from which he had cut a branch, saw his entire life pass before him.

"Oh!" said he, of a sudden, drawing Leona towards him, and pressing her to his breast, "you have been the visible angel who, through the rough paths I have followed, have guided me from the point from which I started to the point whither I have returned!"

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"And I swear to you, my beloved duke," returned Leona, "to continue in the world of spirit the mission I have received in the world of men!"

Emmanuel regarded the young woman with that anxiety he had experienced when he saw her again.

Leona, with her hand extended, her face palely lit up by the dying sun of autumn, seemed already much more a shadow than a living creature.

Emmanuel bent his head, and heaved a sigh.

"Ah! at last you begin to understand," said Leona; "as I can no longer be thine, as I have not the strength to remain longer in this world, I can now only belong to God!"

"Leona! Leona!" exclaimed Emmanuel. "That is not what you promised me at Brussels and at Écouen!"

"Oh!" said Leona, "I perform more than I promised, my beloved duke! I promised to see you again once every year, and now I find that is not enough; and, by dint of prayers, I have obtained from God the grace of a speedy death, so that I may never again leave you at all!"

Emmanuel shuddered, as if, instead of the words that struck on his ear, the wing of the angel of death had grazed his heart.

"To die! to die!" said he. "But do you know, then, what is on the other side of life? Have you, like Dante Alighieri of Florence, descended into the mysteries of the tomb, to speak of dying?"

Leona smiled.

"I have not descended, like Dante Alighieri of Florence, into the tomb," she said; "but an angel has issued forth from it, who has conversed with me on the mysteries of life and death."

"My God!" cried Emmanuel, looking at the young woman with an expression that denoted incipient terror; "Leona, are you quite sure you are in full possession of your reason?"

Leona smiled; it could be seen that she had all the deep and gentle security of conviction.

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"I have seen my mother," she said.

Emmanuel pushed Leona from him, but without letting go her hands, and looked at her with eyes that grew more and more astonished.

"Your mother?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, my mother," said Leona, with a tranquillity that sent a shudder through the veins of her lover.

"And when?" asked Emmanuel.

"During last night."

"And where and at what hour did you see her?"

"At midnight, near my bed."

"You have seen her?" persisted Emmanuel.

"Yes," replied Leona.

"And she spoke to you?"

"She spoke to me."

The prince wiped away with one hand the sweat that was bedewing his brow, and with the other pressed Leona to his heart, as if to assure himself that it was a living being, and not a phantom, he had before his eyes.

"Oh!" he cried, "tell me again, my dear child, what you have seen; tell me again what has passed!"

"In the first place," returned Leona, "ever since I have quitted you, I have dreamed every night of the two persons I love best in the world, — you and my mother."

"Leona!" said the prince, pressing his lips on the brow of the young woman.

"My brother!" replied the latter, as if to give to the kiss she received all the chastity of a fraternal embrace.

The duke hesitated an instant; then, in a stifled voice, —

"Well, yes, my sister!" said he.

"Thanks!" said Leona, with a divine smile. "Oh, now I am sure never to leave you more!" And, of her own accord, she offered her brow for a second kiss; but Emmanuel simply rested his head against it.

"I am listening," he murmured.

"I was telling you, my beloved, that ever since I left

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Écouen I have dreamed each night of you and my mother; but all that was but dreaming, and it was only last night that I had the vision—"

"Go on; speak!"

"I was sleeping; I was awakened by an icy pressure. I opened my eyes; a woman clad in white, and veiled, was by my bed; it was this woman who had kissed me on the forehead. I was about to utter a cry; she raised her veil, and I recognised my mother."

"Leona! Leona! are you thinking well of what you are saying?" cried Emmanuel.

Leona smiled.

"I stretched my arms to embrace her," she continued; "but she made a sign, and my arms fell inert by my side. I was chained to my bed; it seemed as if my eyes alone lived. My eyes were fixed on the phantom, and my mouth murmured, 'My mother!'"

Emmanuel started.

"Oh, I was not afraid; I was happy!"

"And you say, Leona, that the phantom spoke to you?"

"Yes. 'My daughter,' it said, 'this is not the first time that God has permitted me to see you again since my death; and often, in your sleep, must you have felt me near you. For often have I come, gliding between the curtains, as now, to see you sleep; but this is the first time that God has permitted me to speak to you.' 'Speak, mother,' I answered; 'I listen.' 'My daughter,' continued the phantom, 'in favour of the White Cross of Savoy, to which you have sacrificed your love, not only does God pardon you, but permits that when any great danger threatens the duke you may give him warning—'"

The duke regarded Leona doubtfully.

"'To-morrow, when the duke comes to see you, you will tell him of the holy mission wherewith the Lord has charged you; then, as he will doubt—' For the phantom warned me that you would doubt, my beloved!"

"Yes, indeed, Leona!" replied Emmanuel, "what you

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are telling me is extraordinary enough to permit of my doubting it!"

"'Then, as he will doubt,' pursued the phantom, 'you will tell him that at the very hour when a bird will settle on the branch of willow he has cut and planted, and sing, — that is to say, on the 17th of November, at three in the afternoon, — Scianca-Ferro will arrive at Verceil, bearing a letter from the Duchess Marguerite. Then he will be forced to believe.' And the phantom lowered her veil, murmuring, 'Adieu, my daughter! you will see me again at the proper time!' After which she vanished."

No sooner had Leona ceased speaking than a bird, which seemed to drop from the skies, settled on the branch of willow planted by the duke, and began to sing melodiously.

Leona smiled.

"You see, my dear duke," she said, "at this moment Scianca-Ferro is entering Verceil, where you will find him to-morrow."

"In truth," replied Emmanuel, "if what you announce is true, it will be a miracle."

"And will you believe me then?"

"Yes."

"Will you do, on a certain occasion, what I tell you?"

"It would be a sacrilege not to obey you, Leona, for you would come as God's messenger."

"That is all I had to say to you, my dear Emmanuel. Let us return now."

"Poor child!" murmured the duke, "it is not astonishing that you are so pale, having received the kiss of the dead!"

The next day, on arriving at the castle of Verceil, Emmanuel Philibert found Scianca-Ferro waiting for him.

The brave squire had entered, the evening before, into the grand court just when three o'clock was striking; he brought a letter from the duchess!

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XIX.

THE DEAD KNOW EVERYTHING.

The letter of the Princess Marguerite was accompanied by a sum of three hundred thousand crowns.

Maréchal de Bourdillon, who, without doubt, was acting according to the secret orders he received from the Duc de Guise, refused to withdraw his garrisons, unless the men received their arrears of pay. Seeing that the French did not evacuate Piedmont as quickly as they were bound to do, Emmanuel Philibert wrote a letter to his nephew. King François II., prompted by the Guises, replied that the soldiers would not abandon Piedmont until they received a sum of a hundred thousand crowns due to them.

"Now," said the good Princess Marguerite, "as it is indisputable that France, and not you, should pay French soldiers, I send you, my beloved master and lord, this sum of one hundred thousand crowns, the value of my jewels, most of which were gifts to me from my father, François I., when I was a young girl.

"And thus," she added, "it is France that pays, and not you."

The French troops were therefore paid, and the only garrisons remaining were those in the reserved cities: Turin, Chivas, Chieri, and Villeneuve d'Asti.

Then Emmanuel returned to Nice with Scianca-Ferro, who did not stay there any time, but returned to Paris, to resume his post near the Duchess Marguerite.

The princess was not to enter the states of her husband until all trace of disorder was effaced.

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Perhaps his love for Leona rendered the duke a little ungrateful. Certainly, he did not exhibit the eagerness to see again that excellent princess which her merits deserved.

He devoted all his efforts to the complete reorganisation of his country, and began by dealing fittingly with the ingratitude or forgetfulness shown by one portion of his subjects, and the loyalty that distinguished another.

A large number of his subjects had thrown themselves into the French party; a smaller number had held aloof, remaining passively faithful to the duke; finally, others had been constant to him in evil fortune, and had taken an active part in his interests. He advanced the latter to positions of honour and influence; he forgave the second class their weakness, and even did them favours when the opportunity presented itself; as to the first, he did them neither good nor evil, but excluded them from all participation in public affairs, saying, —

"I have no reason for trusting them in my prosperity, when they abandoned me in my misfortunes."

Then he remembered that the peasants of Oleggio had asked for magistrates who would render them justice instead of selling it; he therefore placed at the head of the judiciary order Thomas of Langusque, Count of Stropiane, a magistrate celebrated for his integrity and profound knowledge of the laws.

Moreover, two senates replaced the old councils of justice and the parliaments established by the French occupation. Now, on the western slope of the Alps was born the proverb, "God preserve us from the equity of the parliament!" and this proverb — as Hannibal and Charlemagne had done, and as Napoleon was to do — had passed from the Western Alps to the Eastern Alps.

It took a longer time to establish peace than justice.

We have spoken of the two causes of war; a war territorial, and a war religious, which existed in the very bosom of Savoy.

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A *territorial war* with the Swiss Confederation, which had taken possession of the Pays de Vaud, the Comté du Romont, Gex, and Le Chablais.

Emmanuel Philibert consented to surrender to the Bernese all the right bank of Lake Leman, on condition that Le Chablais, Gex, and the bailiwicks of Ternier and Gaillard should be restored.

Peace was made on these terms.

A *religious war* with the reformers of the valleys of Pragelas, Lucerne, and Saint-Martin.

We have said that by allying themselves with the Calvinists of Geneva and the Lutherans of Germany these schismatics had become a power.

Emmanuel Philibert sent against them the bastard of Achaia.

The latter penetrated into the valleys with an army of four or five thousand men: it was thought sufficient for the reduction of a population unskilled in arms and with no other weapons of defence except its implements of tillage; but everything becomes a weapon in the hands of him who truly wishes to fight for the twofold liberty of soul and body. The men hid their old men and wives and children in caverns known only to themselves alone; they had received considerable quantities of powder from their co-religionists of Geneva. Along all the routes which the Catholics were to follow, the rocks were mined; hardly were the invaders engaged in the defiles, when they heard above their heads the rumbling of a thunder more terrible than that of heaven, a bolt that fell with each lightning flash. The mountains trembled under these detonations; the rocks, suddenly torn from their bases, seemed first to mount to the clouds, then fell back entire, or in fragments, rolled along the slopes of the mountains like avalanches of granite, and struck men who, when they sought for their adversaries, saw only frightened eagles hovering in the sky.

This war lasted nearly a year.

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In fine, Vaudois and Catholics, worn out, came to terms of peace. Perhaps, too, Emmanuel Philibert wished only to give a pledge of his desire to exterminate heresy to the Guises, who were governing France, constructing stakes on the Grève, and preparing for Saint-Bartholomew, and to Philip II., who was governing Spain, and erecting scaffolds in Brussels, Antwerp, and Ghent.

The result of the conferences was that the Vaudois expelled their most turbulent *barbas*, — it was the name the Vaudois gave to their priests, on account of the long beards they wore, — and, these being sent away, the inhabitants had the right to hold their worship in the places where from time immemorial they had held it.

Only, as a Catholic population also existed in the valley, and, although smaller in number, had a right to liberty of worship, two villages were designated in each valley, in which Mass could be celebrated.

The Vaudois pastors bade farewell to their families, and, in order not to excite a disturbance among their flocks, if it were seen that they were exiles, they departed under the garb of muleteers and shepherds.

After their departure, Emmanuel erected, at the entrance to the valleys, the strong forts of Peyrouse, Villars, and La Tour.

There being universal peace throughout his duchy, he wrote to the duchess to meet him at Nice; then, as it was the 12th of November, of the year 1560, he set out for his castle of Verceil.

On the morning of the 17th he was at Oleggio.

It was the second anniversary of his visit to Leona since his marriage.

Leona awaited him, as the first year, on the threshold of her little house.

There was, in these two hearts, in this chaste love, such a communion of thoughts that Emmanuel had no idea of missing the rendezvous, and Leona had no idea of Emmanuel missing it.

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As soon as Emmanuel perceived Leona, he spurred his horse to a gallop, happy to see her again, trembling at seeing her look paler and nearer the tomb than the last time.

It might have been said that Leona foresaw the impression her face would make on her lover: her face was covered by a veil.

Emmanuel shuddered at sight of her: she looked like that veiled shadow whose appearance she had recounted on his last visit.

He lifted the veil with a trembling hand, and two tears silently coursed down his cheeks.

Leona's skin had the whiteness of Parian marble; her look seemed a flame ready to be extinguished, her voice a breath ready to expire. She was evidently making an effort to live.

A slight blush passed over the cheeks of the young woman on seeing her lover. Her heart was always living, and every beat of it said, "I love you!"

A collation was ready, but Leona did not taste it; she seemed already a stranger to the needs and weaknesses of this world.

After breakfast she took the arm of Emmanuel, and both took the same walk through the village which they had taken the year before.

This time there was no sign of those groups of anxious peasants, eagerly questioning one another on the virtues or defects of their duke; a year had elapsed, and that year had made him known. Except the war in the three valleys, which had no echo beyond, peace had done its maternal work: the French garrisons left the towns they had been ruining for twenty years; justice was impartially rendered to great and small. So all were at their several occupations, — the labourers in the fields, the artisans in the workshops.

The people blessed the duke, and had only one wish; namely, that the Princess Marguerite should give an heir to the throne of Savoy.

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Every time this wish was expressed in presence of the two travellers, Emmanuel started and regarded Leona.

Leona smiled, and answered for the duke, —

"God, who has restored to us our beloved sovereign, will not abandon Savoy!"

At the end of the village Leona took the road she had taken the preceding year; and, after a walk of a quarter of an hour, both found themselves in front of a little chapel, built on the spot where the duke had, a year before, planted a branch of willow, and where the unknown bird had sung his marvellous song.

It was one of those little chapels of the sixteenth century, so elegant in structure, so slender in form; it was entirely constructed of that charming rose granite which the mountains of the Ticino furnish. In a gilded niche, a Virgin of silver presented to the passers-by her divine Son, who blessed them with extended hand.

Emmanuel, pious as a crusading knight, knelt, and said a prayer.

While it lasted Leona stood near him, her hand resting on his head; then, when he had finished, —

"My beloved duke," said she, "you have promised me, you have even sworn, a year ago, that if, on your return to the castle of Verceil, you met Scianca-Ferro, bearing a letter from the Duchess Marguerite, you would henceforth believe all I said to you, however strange my words might appear, and that you would follow my advice, however mysterious it might be."

"Yes, so I promised," said the duke; "rest assured, I remember it well."

"Was Scianca-Ferro at Verceil?"

"He was."

"Did he arrive at the hour I said?"

"At three exactly he entered the court."

"Was he the bearer of a letter from the Princess Marguerite?"

"The letter was the first thing he handed me when he saw me."

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"You are ready to follow my counsel without discussing it?"

"I believe, my Leona, when you speak to me, that it is the Virgin herself, whose image I have just venerated, who speaks to me through your lips."

"Well, listen then. I have seen my mother again."

Emmanuel started as he had done a year before, when Leona had pronounced the same words.

"And when?" he asked.

"Last night."

"And — what did she say to you?" said Emmanuel, beginning to doubt in spite of himself.

"Come, come," said Leona, smiling, "you are still doubting!"

"No," said the duke.

"This time, then, I shall begin with the proof."

Emmanuel listened.

"Before starting for Verceil you wrote to the princess to meet you at Nice, did you not?"

"It is true," said Emmanuel, with astonishment.

"You told her in your letter that you would be waiting for her at Nice, where she would arrive by sea from Marseilles?"

"You know that?" asked the duke.

"You added that you would conduct her from Nice to Genoa, following the sea-coast by San Remo and Albenga?"

"Good heavens!" murmured Emmanuel.

"Then, from there, you would conduct her through the beautiful valley of the Bormida, by Cherasco and Asti, to Turin?"

"It is true, Leona! But no one except myself knew the contents of this letter, and it was confided to a courier on whom I can depend —"

Leona smiled.

"Did I not tell you that this night I have seen my mother?"

"Well?"

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"The dead know everything, Emmanuel!"

The duke, a prey to involuntary terror, passed his handkerchief across his forehead, which was covered with perspiration.

"It is necessary to believe you!" he murmured. "What said she?"

"Well, my dear Emmanuel, this is what my mother said: 'To-morrow you will see the duke; you will make him promise to start, during the night, with the Duchess Marguerite, by Tenda and Coni, while Scianca-Ferro follows the line along the coast with an empty litter and an escort of a hundred well-armed men.'"

Emmanuel looked at Leona questioningly.

"'The salvation of Savoy is at stake!' is what my mother said to me, Emmanuel, and this is what I now say to you, Emmanuel: you have promised, you have done more than promise, you have sworn to follow my advice; swear to me, then, that you will pass with the duchess by Tenda and Coni, while Scianca-Ferro, with an empty litter and a hundred well-armed men, follows the line along the coast."

The duke hesitated a moment: his reason as a man, his pride as a soldier, were fighting against the promise made, the pledge given.

"Emmanuel," murmured Leona, with a melancholy shake of the head, "who knows? Perhaps it is the last thing I shall ask of you!"

Emmanuel stretched his hand towards the chapel, and swore.

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XX.

THE ROUTE FROM SAN REMO TO ALBENGA.

EMMANUEL PHILIBERT had appointed Nice as the place where the Duchess Marguerite was to meet him, for two reasons: first, in order to reward his faithful city with a fresh mark of his favour; and next, as the journey was to be made in winter, he wished to show her his duchy with its smiling face, with its eternal springtime of Nice and Oneglia.

Duchess Marguerite arrived on the 15th of February, and landed in the port of Villa-Franca; she had been delayed long by the festivals given in her honour at Marseilles; Marseilles had fêted her, both as the aunt of Charles IX., then reigning, and as Duchess of Savoy, and the old Phocian city had rendered her a thousand honours in both capacities.

The duke and duchess remained four months at Nice.

The duke employed this time in hastening the construction of the galleys he had ordered. A Calabrian corsair, named Occhiati, a renegade Christian who had turned Mussulman, had made descents on Corsica and the coast of Tuscany. It was even stated that a hostile vessel had been seen in the waters of the river of Genoa.

At last, towards the beginning of March, with the first zephyrs of that tepid Italian spring that caresses wearied bosoms so gently, Emmanuel decided to set out.

The itinerary of the journey was known beforehand; the royal *cortège* followed what was called the river of Genoa; that is to say, the line of the sea-coast. The duke and duchess — the duke on horseback, the duchess in a litter

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— were to pass by San Remo and Albenga, and relays of horses were prepared in advance.

The departure was fixed for the 15th of March.

At daybreak, the *cortège* filed out of the castle of Nice, the duke on horseback, as we have said, with visor lowered, and armed as if for battle, rode beside the litter, the curtains of which were drawn.

Fifty armed men marched in front and fifty behind.

The first night they halted at San Remo.

At an early hour on the following day, they resumed their march.

They stopped at Oneglia for breakfast; but the duchess did not wish to descend from her litter, and the duke himself carried her bread, wine, and fruit.

The duke ate without unarming, only raising the visor of his casque.

About noon the cavalcade and litter departed.

A little beyond Porto Maurisio, the road narrows between two mountains; you lose sight of the sea, and you find yourself in a narrow defile bristling with rocks on the right and left. If ever there was a fitting place for an ambuscade, surely it was this.

The duke sent twenty men in advance, — an unnecessary precaution; for in these times of peace, what was there to fear?

The twenty men passed on without being troubled.

But the moment the duke, who always kept near the litter, found himself in the defile, a terrible arquebusade resounded, directed specially against the duke and the litter; the horse of the duke was wounded, one of the horses of the litter fell dead, and a feeble cry was heard through the curtains.

At the same time there were savage cries, and the escort was assailed by a band of men in Moorish costume.

It had fallen into an ambuscade of pirates.

The duke was running to the litter, when one of the assailants, a man mounted on a magnificent Arabian steed,

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and covered from head to foot in Turkish mail, rushed upon him, crying, —

"Turn, Duke Emmanuel! you shall not escape me this time."

"Nor you me either," replied the duke.

Then, rising on his spurs, and raising his sword above his head, —

"Do your best," he cried to his soldiers; "I am going to try to show you an example."

And then there was a general *mêlée*, which, however, we shall turn aside from to follow the struggle of the two leaders.

The skill of Emmanuel in the terrible game of war was known to be almost irresistible; but now he had found an enemy worthy of him.

First, each of the adversaries discharged a pistol with the left hand, the balls of which glanced one from the armour of the duke and flattened the other against that of the pirate.

Then the combat, of which this discharge was but the prelude, continued with the sword.

Although armed after the Turkish fashion for defence, the corsair bore, as offensive weapons, a long straight sword in his hand, and had a battle-axe with limber handle and keen blade at his saddle-bow. These axes, the handle of which were made of rhinoceros hide, furnished with little steel blades, had from their very flexibility a terrible force.

The duke had his sword and battle-mace; they were, it will be remembered, his customary weapons; both were equally formidable in his hands.

Some soldiers were running to his help; but he ordered them away, saying, —

"Act on your own account; with God's help, I shall on mine!"

And with God's help he indeed did wonders.

It was evident the pirates had not expected to find so

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strong an escort, and that their chief — who had attacked the duke — had hoped to find him more unprepared and less completely armed; nevertheless, although disappointed, he did not give way an inch.

It was clearly seen that, in the terrible blows he dealt, there was a hatred still more terrible; but finely tempered though the pirate's sword was, it had but little effect on the armour of the duke, and the sword of the duke made just as little impression on the Damascus coat of mail of his antagonist.

In the midst of this furious struggle, the horse of the duke was wounded, and he felt it sink under him. He collected all his strength for one supreme stroke; the sword flamed in his hands. The pirate understood that a terrible blow was about to smite him. He threw himself backwards, and in doing so, made the horse rear.

It was the horse which received the stroke. This time the *chanfrein* of the horse, of less pure steel than the armour of its rider, was cloven; and the horse, struck between the two ears, fell on its knees.

The Moor believed his horse slain; he leaped to the ground at the moment when the duke's own horse fell.

The two adversaries were then on their feet at the same time.

Each ran to his horse's saddle, — the one to seize his battle-axe, the other his mace.

Then, as if they judged the weapons they had taken sufficiently murderous for their purpose, the two combatants flung away their swords, and the pirate remained armed with his axe, the duke with his mace.

Never did Cyclops, forging in the caverns of Etna the thunderbolt of Jupiter on the anvil of Vulcan, deal such doughty blows. It seemed as if death himself, monarch of the ensanguined battle-plain, had for a moment arrested his flight, and was hovering above these two men, certain to bear away in his arms that one of them who was surely to sleep his last sleep.

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At the end of an instant, the duke appeared to have the vantage. The axe of his antagonist carried off a piece of the crown of his casque; but it was evident that the steel points of the mace had pierced the armour of his enemy, inflicting terrible wounds.

Then while the strength of the duke seemed inexhaustible, the Moor was evidently losing his: his hissing respiration was passing visibly through the openings in his helmet; his blows grew less rapid and less vigorous; his arm, if not his hatred, was weakening. But, with every blow he struck, the duke seemed to gain new energy.

The pirate began to recoil, — step by step, insensibly, — but he recoiled. His retreat led him to the border of a precipice; only, his mind being engrossed with parrying blows or dealing them, he appeared to perceive that he was insensibly approaching an abyss.

Both, the one retreating, the other pursuing, arrived thus on the ledge overhanging the precipice; two steps farther, and the pirate had no longer a foothold.

But undoubtedly this was what he wished; for suddenly he flung his axe from him, and, seizing his adversary by the waist, cried, —

"Ah, Duke Emmanuel, I have you at last! We shall die together!"

And with a convulsive effort fit to uproot an oak he lifted his enemy in his arms.

But a terrible burst of laughter answered him.

"I recognised you, bastard of Waldeck," he added, "and you shall not have the honour of dying by his hand."

"Scianca-Ferro!" exclaimed the bastard of Waldeck. "Curses upon thee and thy duke!"

And he stooped down to pick up the axe, and renew the struggle; but during this movement, rapid though it was, the mace of Scianca-Ferro, weighty as the rock upon which both stood, fell on the back of the renegade's head.

The bastard of Waldeck heaved a sigh, and lay prostrate and motionless.

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"Ah!" cried Scianca-Ferro, "brother Emmanuel, you are no longer here to hinder me from crushing this viper!"

And as he had lost his dagger during the combat, he lifted up a mass of rock, with the strength of one of those Titans who piled Pelion on Ossa, and with it crushed the casque and head of his enemy.

Then, with a burst of laughter more terrible still than the first one, —

"What specially pleases me in thy death, bastard of Waldeck, is that, dying in the armour of the infidel, thou art damned like a dog!"

Then, remembering the sigh he had heard issue from the litter, he ran up to it, and drew the curtains apart.

The pirates were flying in all directions.

During all this time, Emmanuel and the princess Marguerite were tranquilly following the route of Tenda and Coni. They had reached the latter city nearly at the very hour when the terrible combat we have just related was taking place between San Remo and Albenga.

Duke Emmanuel was anxious.

What reason had Leona for insisting on this change of route? What danger did he run by following that of the river of Genoa? And if there was peril, must not that peril have fallen on Scianca-Ferro? Who had informed Scianca-Ferro of the promise made by him, Emmanuel, to Leona? And how did it happen that at the very moment he was about to speak to Scianca-Ferro of the change of route, the latter should come to him and speak of it first?

The supper was sad. Princess Marguerite was fatigued; on his part, Emmanuel Philibert pretended he was in need of rest, and retired to his chamber at ten. It seemed to him as if every moment some messenger of bad news must arrive.

He ordered two men to watch, one at the door, the other at the ante-chamber, in order that he might be wakened at any hour of the night and informed if anything occurred.

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It struck eleven; Emmanuel opened his window. The sky was covered with stars, the air balmy and pure; a bird was singing in a pomegranate bush, and it seemed to the duke as if it was the same bird he had heard singing at Oleggio. At the end of half an hour, he shut the window, and leaned his elbows on a table covered with papers.

Gradually his eyes clouded, his eyelids grew heavy; he heard the first vibrations of midnight vaguely hum in his ears. Then it seemed, as through a mist, he saw the door of his chamber open, and something advance which resembled a shadow.

The shadow approached, and bending over him, murmured his name.

At the same moment an icy impress on his brow sent a shudder through his whole body; this pressure broke the invisible bonds which enchained him.

"Leona! Leona!" he cried.

It was indeed Leona who was beside him, but this time, her lips did not breathe, her eyes had no light; a few drops of pale blood fell from a wound she had received in her breast.

"Leona! Leona!" repeated the duke.

And he stretched his arms to seize the phantom; but the latter made a sign, and the prince's arms fell back.

"I told thee, my beloved Emmanuel," murmured the apparition, in a voice sweet as a perfumed zephyr, "that I should be nearer to thee dead than living!"

"Why did you leave me, Leona?" asked Emmanuel, feeling his heart melt in sobs.

"Because my mission on earth was accomplished, my beloved duke," replied the shade; "but before I return to heaven, God permits me to tell you that the wish of your subjects is accomplished."

"Which one?"

"The Princess Marguerite is with child, and you shall have a son."

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"Leona! Leona!" cried the prince, "who has revealed to thee this mystery of maternity?"

"The dead know everything!" murmured Leona.

And, as the body faded away into mist, a voice almost unintelligible said, —

"Our next meeting will be in heaven, my beloved!"

And the phantom disappeared.

The duke, who had been chained to his chair while the phantom was near him, rose and ran to the door.

The servant on guard had seen no one enter or leave.

"Leona! Leona!" cried Emmanuel, "shall I see you again?"

And it seemed to him as if a breathing in his ear hardly perceptible to the senses whispered, —

"Yes."

The next day the duke, instead of continuing his journey, stopped at Coni; he thought he should surely receive news there.

And, in fact, about two o'clock, Scianca-Ferro arrived.

"Is Leona dead?" were the first words which Emmanuel said to him.

"Yes. But how do you know?" replied Scianca-Ferro.

"Of a wound in the breast?" continued Emmanuel.

"Of a ball destined for the duchess," said Scianca-Ferro.

"And who was the miserable assassin," cried the duke, "who attempted to take the life of a woman?"

"The bastard of Waldeck," replied Scianca-Ferro.

"Oh!" said the duke, "may he never fall into my hands!"

"I swore to you, Emmanuel, that the first time he ever fell into my hands I should crush him —"

"Well?"

"I have crushed him."

"Then all that is left for us is to pray for Leona!" said Emmanuel Philibert.

"It is not for us to pray for angels," answered Scianca-Ferro; "it is for angels to pray for us."

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On the 12th of January, 1562, as Leona had predicted, Princess Marguerite was happily delivered, at the castle of Rivoli, of a son, who received the names of Charles Emmanuel, and reigned fifty years.

Three months after the birth of the young prince, the French, according to the terms of the convention of Cateau-Cambrésis, evacuated Turin, Chieri, Chivas, and Villeneuve-d'Asti, as they had already evacuated the rest of Piedmont.

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EPILOGUE.

One fine morning at the beginning of September, 1580, — that is to say, about twenty years after the events we have just related, — a score of those gentlemen who were called the Ordinaries of King Henri III., and whose total number was forty-five, were waiting, in the grand court of the Louvre, for the hour when the king, on passing through it to Mass, would take them to perform their devotions, whether they were willing or not; for one of the manias of King Henri was to trouble himself, not only about the care of his own soul, but the souls of others as well. And just as Louis XIV. was to say, fifty years later, "Come and bore yourselves with me," to his favourites, so Henri III. used to say, "Come and save yourselves with me," to his minions.

The life led by the Ordinaries, or the Forty-five, of his Majesty — they were called indifferently by both names — was anything but amusing; the rule of the Louvre was almost as severe as that of a convent, and the king, pointing to the death of Saint-Mégrin, Bussy-d'Amboise, and two or three other gentlemen, a death caused by their exaggerated love for the fair sex, used to take these as a text from which he thundered against women, and represented them as inferior and even dangerous beings.

The poor young gentlemen were then forced — if they wished to stand in the good graces of the king — to find all their recreation in practising arms, playing football, shooting sparrows with air-guns, curling their hair, inventing new kinds of collars, saying their beads, and scourg-

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ing themselves, if, in the middle of this innocent life, the devil, who does not respect even the saints, came to tempt them.

This being understood, it will not be a matter of surprise that, on seeing an old fellow with one leg, one arm, and one eye, asking alms of a light-horseman stationed at the door of the Louvre, one of the Forty-five should make him a sign to enter, and after giving him a coin and putting him a few questions, should have called his comrades at once, with that innocent passion for gossip found equally among the students shut within the walls of a college, the nuns in their convent, and the soldiers in a fortress.

The young people ran up, and, surrounding the newcomer, made him the object of a profound examination.

Let us hasten to say that the person who had the honour of attracting such general attention well deserved the trouble of examining him.

He was a man about sixty, who, for that matter, did not appear of any age, seeing the strange physical condition to which his campaigns had reduced him, and the adventurous life he seemed to have led.

Besides the eye, arm, and leg which were wanting to him, his face was hacked with sabre-cuts, his fingers shattered with pistol-shots, and his head mended in several places with tin plates.

His nose was so covered with cuts and thrusts and scars of all sorts that it resembled one of those baker's tallies, on which a notch is made for every loaf sold on credit.

Such an exhibition was, it will be acknowledged, a curious one for young people, who, in default of sweeter amusements, found a great attraction in duelling.

So questions rained on the mendicant, thick as hail. "What 's your name?" — "How old are you?" — "What tavern did you lose your eye in?" — "In what ambuscade did you leave your arm?" — "On what field of battle did you forget your leg?"

"Come, now, gentlemen," said one of the inquirers, "let

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us have some order in our questions, or the poor devil will never be able to answer us."

"But we should first find out whether he has lost his tongue also."

"No, thank God, my noble lords, I have kept my tongue still! and if you will be gracious to an old captain of adventures, I will employ it in singing your praises."

"A captain of adventures, you? Go to!" said one of the young people. "Do you think you shall ever make us believe you were a captain of adventures?"

"It was at least the title given me more than once by Duc François de Guise, whom I helped to take Calais, by Amiral de Coligny, whom I aided in defending Saint-Quentin, and by the Prince de Condé, whom I aided in entering Orléans."

"You have seen these illustrious captains?" asked one of the gentlemen.

"I have seen and spoken to them, and they have spoken to me. Ah! you are brave, gentlemen, I have no doubt of it; but let me tell you that the race of the valiant and the strong has departed!"

"And you are the last?" retorted a voice.

"Not of those whom I mentioned," returned the mendicant; "but the last, in fact, of an association of braves. We were ten adventurers, look you, my gentlemen, with whom a captain might attempt anything; but death has taken us one by one, and has carried us off in detail."

"And what were, I shall not say the adventures: but the names of the adventurers?" said one of the Ordinaries.

"You are right not to ask their adventures: their adventures alone would make a poem, and he who could write it, poor Fracasso, has unfortunately died of a contraction of the throat; but, as to names, that is another thing."

"Well, then, the names?"

"There was Dominico Ferrante: he was the first to go. One evening, passing with two companions close by the Tour de Nesle, he took the idea into his head of offering to

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a devil of a Florentine sculptor his help in carrying a bag of money which the latter had just received from the treasurer of François I. Benvenuto, who was late, and thought he heard the clock of Saint-Germain-aux-Près striking twelve, mistook this polite offer for an evidence of cupidity, whipped out his sword, and by a rapid movement pinned my poor Ferrante to the wall."

"That's what comes of being obliging," said one of the auditors to another.

"The second was Vittorio Albani Fracasso,— a great poet who could work only by moonlight. One evening that he was searching for a rhyme in the neighbourhood of Saint-Quentin, he fell, by chance, into an ambuscade prepared for Prince Emmanuel Philibert. He was so engrossed by his pursuit of this rhyme that he forgot to ask the ambuscaders why they were there; so that Duke Emmanuel having come in the mean while, Fracasso found himself in the middle of the hubbub; he was doing his best to get out of it when he was felled by a mace in the hands of the duke's squire, — a terrible fellow, named Scianca-Ferro. Now, the ambuscade failed, but Fracasso remained on the field of battle; and as, from the state he was in, he could not explain how he came there, they tied a cord round his neck and hoisted him to the branch of an oak! Although poor Fracasso, as became a poet, was as thin as a snipe, the weight of the body, for all that, contracted the knot, and the contraction of the knot contracted the gullet. It was the very moment when he wanted to give such explanations as might clear his honour, which was seriously compromised; but he had revived a second too late. The explanations could not pass down along the cord, and remained at the other end of the running knot; and this gave the impression that the poor innocent had been justly hanged."

"Gentlemen," said a voice, "five *Paters* and five *Aves* for the unfortunate Fracasso!"

"The third," continued the mendicant, "was a worthy

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German adventurer, named Franz Scharfenstein. You have certainly heard of the late Briareus and the defunct Hercules? Well, Franz had the strength of Hercules and the stature of Briareus. He was killed bravely on the breach of Saint-Quentin. God rest his soul and that of his uncle Heinrich, who died an idiot, through excessive weeping!"

"Say, Montaigu," interrupted a voice, "do you think, if you were to die, would your uncle become an idiot through excessive weeping?"

"My dear," replied the person addressed, "there is an axiom of law which says: *non bis in idem.*"

"The fifth," continued the mendicant, "was a brave Catholic, named Cyrille Népomucène Lactance. He is sure of his salvation; for, after combating twenty years for our holy religion, he died a martyr."

"A martyr! *peste!* tell us about that."

"It is a simple story, my lords. He served under the orders of the famous Baron des Adrets, who at that moment was a Catholic. Of course you must know that the Baron des Adrets spent his life in changing from Catholic to Protestant, and from Protestant to Catholic. He was a Catholic for the time; and Lactance was serving under his orders when the baron having made some Huguenots prisoners on the eve of Corpus Christi, and not knowing what kind of death to inflict on them, Lactance had a holy inspiration. He advised that they be flayed alive, and the houses in the little village of Mornas be hung with their skins instead of tapestry; the baron was delighted with the advice, and put it into execution the next day, to the great glory of our holy religion! But it happened that the baron became a Protestant in the following year, and Lactance falling into his hands, the baron remembered the pious advice he had given him, and, in spite of his protests, had him flayed in his turn! I recognised the martyr's skin by a mole he had above the left shoulder."

"Perhaps the same thing will happen to you one day,

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Villequier," said one of the young people to his neighbour; "but, if they skin you, it will not be in order to make a hanging of your hide, else, *mordieu!* there will surely be a profusion of drums in France!"

"The sixth," resumed the adventurer, "was a pretty dandy of our good city of Paris, young, beautiful, gallant, always running after the women —"

"Hush!" interrupted one of the Ordinaries; "do not speak so loud, good man; King Henri III. might hear you, and have you punished for living in such bad company!"

"And what was the name of the rascal whose morals were so very bad?" inquired another.

"Victor Felix Yvonnet. One day, or rather one night, that he happened to be with one of his mistresses, the husband had not the courage to meet him bravely and attack him, sword in hand. He unhinged the door by which Yvonnet was to leave, — a massive oak door, weighing three thousand pounds perhaps! — and placed it in equilibrium on its hinges; at three in the morning Yvonnet bade adieu to his love, and went away to the door of which he had the key. He introduced the key into the lock, turned it round twice, and pulled it; but, instead of turning on its hinges, it fell heavily on poor Yvonnet! If it had been Franz or Heinrich Scharfenstein, they would have shook it off like a sheet of paper; but Yvonnet was, as I have told you, a dandy, a Cupid, with little hands and little feet; the door broke his loins, and the next day he was found dead!"

"Stay," said the one of the Forty-Five who was named Montaigu, "we have now a receipt to give to M. de Châteauneuf; it will not prevent him from being deceived, but it will prevent him from being deceived twice by the same person."

"The seventh," continued the mendicant, "was named Martin Pilletrousse. He was what M. de Brantôme would call an honest gentleman, and perished through an unfortunate misunderstanding. One day M. de Montluc, who

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was passing through a little town, was complimented by all the magistrates except the judges; he determined to exact satisfaction for this incivility; he learned that twelve Huguenots were to be tried on the next day. It was all he wished to know; he went to the prison, and, entering the common hall, asked, 'Is there any Huguenot here?' Now, Pilletrousse, who had known M. de Montluc when he was a furious Huguenot, and was unaware that, like Baron des Adrets, he had changed his religion, happened to be in that hall, accused of some wretched trifle or other; he thought M. de Montluc asked for the Huguenots in order to free them. Not at all; it was in order to have them hanged! When poor Pilletrousse saw how matters were, he protested with all his might; but it was all in vain; they took him at his first word, and he was hanged high and quick, the 12th! The next day, who were caught in a trap? The judges, who had no longer any one to try. But, meanwhile, poor Pilletrousse was dead."

"*Requiescat in pace!*" said one of the listeners.

"It is a Christian wish, my young gentleman," replied the mendicant. "and I thank you in the name of my friend."

"Now for the eighth," said a voice.

"The eighth was named Jean Chrysostome Procope· he was from Lower Normandy —"

"The king, gentlemen! the king!" cried a voice.

"Come, draw back, you rascal!" said the young lords, "and try not to find yourself in the way of his Majesty, who cares only for handsome faces and graceful figures."

It was, in truth, the king who was descending from his apartments, having M. de Guise on his right, and M. de Lorraine on his left. He seemed very melancholy.

"Gentlemen," said he to the courtiers who lined his passage, hiding as best they could the man who was minus an eye, a leg, and an arm, "you have often heard me speak of the truly royal manner in which I was received in Piedmont by Duke Emmanuel Philibert of Savoy?"

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The young noblemen inclined, in sign that they remembered.

"Well, I have received this morning the painful tidings of his death, which took place in Turin on the 30th of August, 1580."

"And, no doubt, sire," asked one of the Forty-five, "this great prince has died a fine death?"

"A death worthy of him, gentlemen; he died in the arms of his son, saying to him: 'My son, learn from my death what ought to be your life, and from my life what ought to be your death. Your age renders you capable of governing the states which I leave you; be careful to preserve them for your posterity, and rest assured that God will watch over them as long as you live in fear of Him!' Gentlemen, Duke Emmanuel Philibert was one of my friends; I shall wear mourning for him during eight days, and during eight days I will hear Mass for his intention. He who does the same will do me a pleasure."

And the king continued his way to the chapel; the gentlemen followed, and heard Mass religiously with him.

After leaving the church the first thing they looked for was the beggar; but he had disappeared. At the same time disappeared with him the purse of Sainte-Maline, the comfit-box of Montaigu, and the gold chain of Villequier.

The adventurer had but one hand, but, as we see, he knew how to use it.

The three young people wished to learn if he made as good use of his only leg as of his unmated hand, and ran to the door to find from the sentinel what had become of the lame mendicant with whom they had been talking half an hour before.

"Gentlemen," said the light-horseman, "he vanished behind the Hôtel de Petit Bourbon, but, when leaving, he said very politely: 'My gentleman, it may be the noble lords with whom I have just had the honour of conversing may desire to know the end of my last two companions, and also the name of the poor devil who has survived them.

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My two companions were named Procope and Maldent; one was a Norman and the other a Picard, and both were very adroit. The first died attorney to the Châtelet; the second, a doctor of the Sorbonne. As for myself, my name is César Annibal Malemort, very much at their service, if I was fit for it.'"

These were the only tidings of the last of the adventurers that reached the Forty-five or that have come down to us.

Chance decreed that the one who ought to have been the first to succumb had miraculously survived them all.

THE END.

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